THE WONDER of WAR in the HOLY LAND

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WHERE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT.
Few things have been stranger than the grim business of war in the Holy Land, amid places full of sacred associations.

THE WONDER OF WAR IN THE HOLY LAND

BY

FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

Author of "The Wonder of War in the Air," "The Wonder of War on Land," "The Wonder of War at Sea," and the "U. S. Service Series"

With Forty-seven Illustrations from War Photographs and Sketches

BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published, August, 1919

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The Wonder of War in the Holy Land

Norwood Press
BERWICK & SMITH CO
NORWOOD, MASS.
U. S. A.

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FOREWORD

THE Author desires to express his acknowledgment of the courtesy of certain officers attached to the British Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia, who have given some interesting sidelights on the campaign. Acknowledgment also is made of the assistance received from three books on Mesopotamia and Palestine: "British Campaigns in the East, 1914–1918," by Edmund Dane; "The War in the Cradle of the World" by Eleanor Franklin Egan; and "By Desert Ways to Badgad" by Louise Jebb. Acknowledgment is made to *Blackwood's Magazine,* for quotations from many articles of the highest importance and authority on the Eastern question published during the war. For illustrations the author is mainly indebted to the *Sketch* and the *Illustrated London News,* both of London, which had special artists in the East during the arduous campaigns of the Great War.

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PREFACE

War is never more terrible than when it lays a destructive hand on those things which are of incalculable value either for historic or sacred reasons; it is never nobler than when reverence and fair dealing rise superior to the lurid exigencies of strife.

During the campaigns in the two Holy Lands of the World, the Holy Land of the Old Testament and of the New, Palestine and Mesopotamia, battle-grounds took on a curious glamor. The Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, the journeys of Abraham, Moses and Pharaoh, Joshua at Jericho, Samson, the campaigns of David, the prophecies of Isaiah and the conflicts of Judas Maccabæus, the deserts beyond Jordan where John the Baptist lived, the sacred places associated with Jesus of Nazareth, all these became familiar words. Old campaigns between the Children of Israel and the Philistine were studied by generals as guides to modern strategy, and soldiers suddenly found the Bible as real a book to them as though it dealt with their native towns.

PREFACE

Three great faiths have been born in these lands, each of which holds millions of worshipers. No intelligent boy can ignore the fact that these three Faiths have changed the character of the world. Their history is full of interest and surprise, and the peoples who believe them have been molded by them.

These campaigns have been full of romance and picturesqueness. Long lines of camels pace black-pebbled deserts, Bedouin Arabs on their pure-bred steeds appear and disappear; modern aëroplanes fly over distant lands, unconscious that they are fulfilling prophecy, great engineering works make the apparently impossible come true. To give the boys of the United States a clearer perception of that wonderful part of this Earth—the East, to show how the western nations nobly and kindly fulfilled their obligations of honor, to give an immediate and applicable meaning to great lives of sacred and secular history, and, above all, to show how closely akin courage may be to reverence, is the aim and purpose of

THE AUTHOR.

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THE WONDER OF WAR IN THE HOLY LAND

CHAPTER I

THE LAYING OF THE CURSE

The discordant laugh of a striped hyena split the silence of the waste, and echoed among the shapeless dust-mounds and choked high-banked canals which are all that now remain of Babylon the Golden City, Babylon, once the mistress of the world.

An eager-eyed boy scrambled to a kneeling position and reached out his hand for his rifle.

"Father, shall I shoot?" he cried.

"No, David, no," the archæologist answered, rising on one elbow to look at the flitting gray shape that howled maniacally as it fled in the dusk.

The three men, the archæologist, his son and the Arab headman, all members of the exploring party, were seated or lying on the ground; the

day spent in the excavation of the ruins under the direct rays of a Mesopotamian sun, had been excessively fatiguing, and a brief rest had been ordered before the return to camp.

The lad fingered his modern rifle longingly.

"I could get him, sure!" he asserted.

"Perhaps," his father agreed, "but the hyena has more right here than we. He is the true possessor of the land. It is we who are the intruders."

And Ibrahim-el-Thiab, the old Bedouin Arab of the party, added gravely:

"To every life there is a purpose. Even the bone-crushing jaws of Abu Madba' (the hyena) are a gift from Allah."

"So are the poison fangs of the deaf adder," retorted the lad, "but that does not prevent your killing it."

"The Daboia viper is deaf to wisdom," answered the Arab, "and it is written that he who will not hear wisdom may be smitten to death with a staff. Yet, deaf though the viper may be, he can be made the minister of justice if Allah wills it. So happened it once to Mohammed-el-Raschid."

Now Ibrahim was a famed story-teller even in

that land of the remote East where story-telling takes the place of music, of art and of the theater. The marvelous tales of the Arabian Nights Entertainments were born at caravan halts. David at once scented a story behind this allusion to the deaf adder and shifted his position to face the Arab.

"Tell me the story, Ibrahim!" he pleaded.

The Bedouin turned to the archæologist.

"It is a tale of blood, O Man of Peace," he said. "Is it your wish that a boy should hear such tales?"

"There is no place more fitting than the ruins of Babylon to hear a tale of the death that strikes in the dark," was the reply. "Neither is there any time better than the dusk for tales of blood. It injures no one, young or old, to hear a true tale well told."

The Bedouin made acknowledgment of the compliment with a grave inclination of the head. Then, drawing his cloak more closely about him, he began his recital with the assured ease of one who had spent many a hundred desert evenings telling tales under the stars.

"It was many years ago," he began, "when the father of my father was still young, that fifty

Bedouin warriors of the Raschid tribe left their tents on a ghazu (raid). Their tents, at that time, were on the further side of the Jordan, which, as you know, is a river that may not be trusted. The time was in late summer when the water was low and they crossed the hot jungle-valley of El Ghor in safety.

"There were but fifty of the Raschid warriors, but the steel of their spears was sharp, the barrels of their guns were straight. The hand and the heart of the Bedouin," the Arab continued, "are always true."

"It is a proverb, O Ibrahim-el-Thiab," declared the archæologist. "Do not your people say: 'As straight as the sunbeam to the sand, so is the blow of the Bedouin to its mark'?"

"It is indeed so said," the Arab replied, again acknowledging the courteous compliment. Then he continued:

"Though the band numbered but fifty, the Raschids had horses of the best, steeds which came from the Abeyan, Saklawy, Julfa, Khalawy, and Marghub breeds, the only true breeds of horses in the world, steeds as wonderful as those of whom the Prophet tells that the great King Solomon forgot his prayers the first day that he

saw them. With such horses it was but a day's ride for the Raschids to a camp of the Adouan Bedouin. They rode up with the speed of a desert wind and surprised their enemies in their sleep.

"Since the Adouans were too few to fight, they offered no resistance, but nursed revenge. What says the Prophet: 'Accept reproof from a friend but not injury from a foe.' One of the Adouans, however, on seeing that the Raschids had not only taken away his horses but also many of the crooked-necked ones (camels), became ill-content. Forgetting that 'Time comes from Allah, but hurry is the child of the Evil One', he pursued the victors of the successful ghazu. His haste outran his judgment and he fired at Mohammed-el-Raschid. It was not written that the Raschid should die that day, so the bullet sped wide of its mark. Mohammed, turning in his saddle, fired in response and the Adouan Bedouin fell. This made the Raschids blood-debtors to the Adouans. Is it not written that a life shall be given for a life?"

"Yet, Ibrahim," interposed the archæologist, "sometimes a money payment may be made."

"It is true," the Aran admitted, "the Prophet

so allows, but among the Bedouins it is rare that money is offered, save when the killing has been by accident. For the slaying of the Adouan by Mohammed, the Raschids would never offer a money payment, since the slaying had been only after the Adouan had opened the attack. Many years passed before the Raschids and the Adouans chanced again to meet, wherefore the blood-feud was not settled, nor the debt paid.

"A true Moslem never forgives, for it is written that if it is ordained that a certain thing shall be done, Time will bring the opportunity. On a certain day, many years after, Mohammed-el-Raschid, planning a necessary visit towards Beisan, traveled northwards on the western bank of the Jordan, beyond Jericho.

"He did not cross the river into the district of the Adouans. Yet, as he was alone and far from his own kinsmen, he deemed it wiser to be prudent. When dawn came, therefore, he crept into a cave in a wady (dry stream) and went to sleep, with the intention of reaching the tents of his friends by dawn of the following day, traveling only by night.

"When the lids of his eyes were unsealed, the concealing dusk was at hand, even such a light as

that in which we are sitting now, and Mohammed-el-Raschid came out of his cave to continue his night journey. But, just as he descended into the bed of the wady, he suddenly found himself face to face with an Adouan, mounted and with spear upraised.

"Taken by surprise and his spirit still heavy with unshed sleep, Mohammed-el-Raschid fell to the ground and sent up a sudden cry:

" 'I claim protection!'

"The Adouan checked his horse with a powerful hand and deflected the point of his spear, looking down with a stern anger at the man kneeling in the wady bed a few feet in front of his horse's hoofs. In the heart of the Adouan a fierce strife was waging.

"Here was his foe, delivered into his hand, and the blood-feud was still unpaid. Yet here, too, the Adouan, as a pure Bedouin, could not stoop to slay a man who had begged for his protection. His eyes and his heart and his weapons were alike hungry for vengeance. Yet honor forbade and pride restrained.

"Then, as the Adouan sat in his saddle, glaring down at the blood-debtor of his family, in the dim light his quick eye caught sight of a Daboia viper

as it retreated to its hole in the rock not far from the spot where the Raschid suppliant was crouched.

" 'Mohammed-el-Raschid,' declared the Adouan, 'no man can set his feet on any path save that one on which it is written that he must tread. Arise and take that path.'

" 'Swear first,' Mohammed answered, 'that you give the protection I have claimed.'

" 'An Adouan is a true Bedouin,' declared the horseman imperiously, 'and I swear to you by Allah and by Abraham the friend of Allah, that I will not seek your life by any action of hand or weapon of mine and that I will not speak to any of my kinsfolk as to your whereabouts.

" 'So far, and no farther, you are safe from me. Your death I shall leave to the will of Allah, that it may be when and where He will.

" 'But, that you may rightly claim this protection, Mohammed-el-Raschid, I shall require an oath from you in return. Swear by Allah and by Abraham the friend of Allah, that you will never plan, attempt or do any evil against me, my family, my people or their belongings, and, that your oath may bind you, for a mu'hrab (praying-niche)

place your hand firmly within that hole in the rock yonder and deliver you of your oath.'

"Whereupon, on hearing that the Adouan would spare his life, Mohammed-el-Raschid rose gladly and put his hand into the hole in the rock to swear the oath which had been demanded of him.

"No sooner, however, had his hand entered the niche in the rock, than the Daboia viper, which the Adouan had seen coiled there, struck that stroke which never needs to be repeated.

"The Adouan leaned down from his horse and watched the death torments of his ghareem (feud-enemy).

" 'I said that your death should be left to the will of Allah,' he mocked. 'Allah is all-merciful, but He is also just.'

" 'It is written,' answered the dying man calmly, 'that no man can cheat his last day,' and so died.[1]

"The Adouan rode back to his people to tell them that the blood-debt was paid, and the Daboia viper crawled out of his hole in the rock, perhaps

[1] "The Immovable East," by Philip J. Baldensperger (Small, Maynard & Co.).

conscious, perhaps unconscious—who knows?—that Allah had chosen him for a messenger."

"You think that an animal can understand the decrees of Allah?" queried the old professor.

"If one of the four-footed," returned the Arab, "can be taught to understand the will of a human master, who is not all powerful, why cannot he understand the will of Allah, who is all-powerful?"

"Even a hyena?" queried the boy, incredulously.

Ibrahim turned slightly in the boy's direction and said gravely,

"Daoud, forget not the old saying: 'The words of a wise man are as water, which the sun may carry away to a far place, but which will some time surely fall again to bless the earth.'

"The wise man Isaiah, whose wisdom is revered by Moslems as well as by Jews and Christians alike, hundreds, yes, thousands of years ago, laid a Dark Curse upon Babylon, and Abu Madba' who laughs yonder in the dark, is one of the creatures upon whom it has been laid by Allah to make true the Curse."

And, in sonorous Arabic, he chanted the destruction of Babylon in the old prophet's words,

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DEATH-DEALING TANKS IN "THE GARDENS OF THE MORNING."

Amid the picturesque cavalry and camel fighting of the campaigns in the Orient, these modern monsters of war struck an ugly note; but where they plunged, they conquered.

his version not differing greatly from that which is written in the Old Testament:

"Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arab pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

"But the wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses and dragons in their pleasant palaces."

Silence, a silence deeper than that of the desert, the heavy silence of things long dead, followed the words of the ancient prophecy which carried the doom and menace of the Dark Curse.

The Arab made a slight gesture toward the scene before their eyes.

Aye, the Curse had come true!

Dust, desolation and waste!

Hillocks and great mounds, some of them as high as small hills, stretched on every side, bare, dreary and unsightly. Stretching on either hand

could be dimly traced the enveloping network of high-banked canals, wherein aforetime the water flowed at a level higher than the land, canals which had spread water over all that thirsty land and made the desert to blossom like a rose. These now were but dust-filled ditches like monstrous mole-burrows on a blasted plain. A few marshy pools in the distance caught the reflections of the sinking sun and threw into high relief the sparse, rough tussocks of coarse grass which here and there caught the blown sand.

Naked, lonely, forgotten, forsaken by all save the beasts of the desert—this was Babylon.

Closer at hand, less than a hundred feet away, still distinguishable in the fading light, could be seen the site of the recent excavations. David could trace the Ishtar Gate of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace, almost whole. The few remaining tiles of bright enamel glinted clearly against the ruins of the pale yellow wall of sun-baked brick, each brick of which, as the boy knew well, was stamped in cuneiform letters, with the name of Nebuchadnezzar.

A jackal slouched swiftly by with a shrill bark, answered by a score of unseen companions. An owl flew out of a dark corner. A bat flittered

overhead. The wind seemed to whistle eerily:

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen—"

"Yet I have heard, Ibrahim," said the professor slowly and musingly, "that there is an old tradition that the curse should be lifted some time."

"It is true," the Arab answered, "but the prophecy is one that can never come to pass. It runs thus, O Man of Peace:

" 'When the wings of the morning fly from the west to the east, then shall the Two Rivers bow to the will of men and the fields of Babylon be green again.' "

David, who had been restless under the old Arab's reverie, burst out impatiently:

"Curses and prophecies and that sort of thing don't mean anything nowadays," he declared. "Why, it's like witchcraft or magic. I'd never have thought you were so superstitious as to believe all that stuff, Ibrahim."

His father answered him quietly.

"It is easy to see, David," he said, "that you have been spending the last few years in an American school, instead of being out here with me. Don't make the mistake of thinking yourself too clever to believe certain things which hun-

dreds of thousands of people do believe fully and sincerely. They can't all be fools, you know. Beware of hasty judgment, my boy. To declare, without evidence, that a thing is not true shows just as much ignorance as to affirm, also without evidence, that it is true. Disbelief is not higher than belief, but lower."

"But you surely don't believe there could be such a thing as a Curse, Father!" protested the boy.

"When you have been out here a little longer and get back again into the spirit of Eastern life, David," the old scholar replied, "perhaps you will come to believe in a great many things that your schoolmates in America would laugh at. As for the Curse—"

He broke off and looked down at Babylon, in all the world the most utter example of ruin and the ravages of Time.

"Strange stories are told on these deserts, David," he said, "stories to which you listen with your whole heart in your ears, stories of battle, stories of mystery, stories of hate and revenge, stories of heroism and noble deeds. But of all the tales the desert holds, there is no story stranger than that of Babylon, none more full of

battle and of blood, of mystery and of magic, of adventure and of wonder. It is the story of a Curse, my boy, a dark and dire Curse, perhaps the greatest curse that was ever written in letters of doom upon the pages of the world's history, and the almost unbelievable story of its dark fulfillment.

"Look before you, David, look on these crumbling heaps, and then think of Babylon in all her glory, Babylon the Golden City, Babylon, the Mistress of the World. Picture to yourself the great metropolis with her sixty miles of walls, her streets teeming with people, her palaces served by troops of slaves, her market-places filled with trade, her two noble rivers covered with shipping, and the plains on every side, as far as the eye could reach, covered with fields of waving grain, fed by the great irrigation canals and ditches raised by the engineers of olden time.

"Yet, even before the days of her fullest glory, the Curse was already written and declared.

"Think of her also, David, as the city of learning. The wisdom and knowledge of Babylon was unsurpassed in the ancient world. Not only was she the richest city of the world, but she was held to be the wisest. The Chaldeans were the sages,

the lawyers, the historians, the priests. In all the arts she was foremost and her schools were the glory of the kingdom.

"But the Curse lay heavy on her, even in her pride.

" 'Thy wisdom and thy knowledge,' run the words of Isaiah's prophetic curse, 'it has perverted thee, and thou hast said in thy heart—I am, and there is none besides me! Therefore shall evil come upon thee and thou shalt not know from whence it ariseth, and mischief shall come upon thee and thou shalt not be able to put it off, and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly which thou shalt not know. . . . Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee. Behold they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them, they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire, to sit before it.' "

The boy shivered in the graying evening light.

"Only the jackal can sit there now," he said.

"Yet it was a great city of homes once," the old scholar continued. "Yonder, David, as you can still trace by the course of the mounds, ran

the great wall. The city was built in the form of a square, each of the four sides fifteen miles in length. The trench from which the clay was dug for the bricks of the wall formed a great moat, wide and deep, filled with flowing water from the Euphrates River.

"So thick was that wall, my boy, that a driveway was made on the top of it, so wide that four chariots might drive abreast. Its height is said to have been three hundred and fifty feet, though probably it was not quite so high. One hundred gates of brass, says Herodotus, the great historian, opened to as many streets, all of them wide and paved with brick. Guarding these gates and situated at other vantage points on the wall, were two hundred and fifty turrets, each ten feet higher than the main structure, and sentinels were posted in every turret."

"There wasn't much chance to catch them napping," declared David, admiringly.

"Yet the Curse fell, for all their watching," returned the professor. And he continued,

"Marvelous, too, was the royal palace, all built of sun-baked brick and faced with hard colored enamels, but the Great King boasted less of his palace than of the fact that even the poorest

houses in the city were well built and had access to ample water, brought into the city by canals from the Euphrates River. The city was divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares, and in the center of every square was a garden with a flowing fountain."

"Fountains! In this desert!" the boy ejaculated.

"Not only fountains in the gardens," the archæologist continued, "but one of the greatest wonders of the ancient world was the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, an edifice of four tiers, built upon arches seventy-five feet high, the garden itself a quarter of a mile in circumference. This was built by the Great King for his favorite queen, Amytis, who had been a Median princess and who pined for the hills and forests of her homeland, amid the flat plains of Babylon. Water was raised from the Euphrates by means of a revolving screw. Built on great pillars of brick, its hundred of thousands of loads of earth carried up on the backs of slaves, the erection of the Hanging Gardens was a labor of terrible proportions, and, like all such work, could only be maintained by constant attention and never-ceasing repair.

"High above all, higher even than the royal

palace or the Hanging Gardens, glittered the Temple of Bel, or Tower of Babel, as it was sometimes misnamed, built in seven great stages, the five lower covered with colored tiles of the hues sacred to the planets, the sixth plated with sheets of silver and the uppermost with plates of gold.

"The statue of Bel, made of solid gold, was enshrined there.

"But, higher than all, hung loweringly the shadow of the Curse.

"Nor did the Curse hang over the city only, but over the whole adjacent country. The highways of the desert ran through the streets of Babylon, crossing the great bridge that spanned the river, a bridge five hundred feet long and thirty feet wide. The desert highways were safe in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. The military power of Assyria had subjugated the world, and caravans moved regularly under armed guards. Each oasis was a fortified post. All the known wells were developed and many more were dug.

"Camel-trains paced the hot sands from Egypt, from Idumea, from Syria and from Sardis. Mule-trains came in from the north. Rafts of inflated skins floated down the Tigris and the Euphrates from Armenia and Kurdistan. Up

the Persian Gulf by oar and sail came ships and barges loaded with gems, ivory, spices, and silks from Asia.

"The threads of the world's life ran to Babylon. Yet the shears of the Curse were already sharpened to cut those threads.

"You knew the story once, David, when we lived out here before, but perhaps you have forgotten. Here, looking down on the shapeless heaps which once were Babylon, it is well that you should know how such a desolation came to pass. Do you remember how it was that Babylon came to be the chief city of the ancient world?"

"I have forgotten a good bit," the boy admitted; "they didn't teach any Ancient History in school. Babylon began as a province of Assyria, didn't it?"

"Babylon began long before Assyria," the archæologist corrected him. "Though even Babylon is young compared with some cities of Mesopotamia, not even a mound rests where Nippur stood, only a little hovel that still carries the name Nippur."

"Was that the first city, Father?"

"It is the first of which we have definite historical evidence," the archæologist replied. "It

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NATIVE RIVER CRAFT ON THE PERSIAN GULF.

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, where once rose Nineveh and Babylon, have been compelled to submit to steamboat and motor-craft.

was the capital of a Sumerian Empire under Ensag-ana.''

''How long ago?''

''Almost eight thousand years. His temple was built about 6,000 B. C. At that time, Eridhu, near the modern Zurnah and by the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, was the center of a Semitic Empire. Now the two Sumerian cities of Nippur and Kis were rivals.''

''Where is Kis, Father?'' asked the boy.

''Either on the very site of Babylon or close to it,'' was the reply. ''Luggal-zaggi-si, King of Kis, conquered all the adjacent lands and enlarged the Sumerian Empire to cover most of western Asia. His capital was at Erech. In 4,000 B. C. the Chaldean city of Ur, where Abraham was born, became the capital. Two centuries later the great Sargon built Babylon in 3,800 B. C. Then came an invasion of the Elamites and there were battles between Kudur-Lagamar (Chedorlaomer) and Khammurabi, in which battles Abraham took a part. Khammurabi became Lord of Western Asia and the power of Babylon was assured; this was about 2,300 B. C. The northern military power of Assyria conquered Babylon during the time of Moses, a thousand years later,

and the Chaldeans established a priestly rule over the land during the period when Saul and David were kings of Israel, about 1,000 B. C. It passed into Assyrian hands during the lifetime of Isaiah about 700 B. C. The city of Nineveh, then, was the center of the world.

"But, while Babylon was only a province of Assyria at this time, it had not lost its power or its prestige. It was, indeed, only at the beginning of its greatness. That came a few years later, when Nabopolassar, who was a vassal King of Babylon, under the Assyrians, joined the allied armies of Media to the northwest and Persia to the northeast, to throw off the yoke of Assyria. The Babylonians, Medes and Persians combined their forces, attacking Nineveh from three sides at the same time, and succeeded in overthrowing the Assyrian Empire. Nabopolassar, as his share of the spoil, received Nineveh, Babylon and the whole valley of the Euphrates. Thus the Second Babylonian Empire was born.

"Nabopolassar was a powerful monarch, but he was a better soldier than an organizer of the arts of peace. You'll find throughout history, David, that the founder of a dynasty is always a soldier, but if the empire is to last, his successor must be

a builder. It was thus that the warrior David was the conqueror of Palestine, but Solomon was the builder; it was thus that the Napoleonic empire fell, for the great general was not given the time to consolidate his conquests.

"When Nabopolassar died, after a long and powerful reign, he was succeeded by Nebuchadnezzar, one of the greatest kings of olden times. He it was who besieged Jerusalem and took the tribes of the Jews into captivity. He it was who took Daniel, a Jewish prince, and made him one of his chief counselors. He it was who set up a great golden image and bade every one in the kingdom at a certain hour bow down and worship it, and those who refused to do so should be cast into a fiery furnace; he it was who cast the three Hebrews, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, into the furnace; and he it was who saw that the men walked in the fire and were not consumed; and, yet again, he it was who, convinced by this miracle, freed the convicted men from the furnace and promoted them to even higher posts in the government of Babylon.

"That mound, David, which you see far off to the left, surmounted by a small mosque, is the site of that fiery furnace, and in it have been found

bricks which have been subjected to an intense heat, quite different from the sun-baked bricks of the buildings around it.

"It was Nebuchadnezzar, again, who forgot this warning when he looked from his royal palace upon the Golden City, who gazed on the Hanging Gardens, who saw the Temple of Bel rising to the stars and who boasted in his pride: 'Is not this Great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty!'

"Then the Curse laid its finger on the king.

"It was Nebuchadnezzar, who, within that same hour, heard a voice warning him that his glory was gone from him, and that he should be expelled from the homes of men in disgust. It was Nebuchadnezzar who, in that same hour, fell ill with that fearful illness which doctors now call lycanthropy, wherein the fevered brain of a man conceives itself to be that of an animal. It was Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King, who 'was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen and his body was wet with the dews of heaven till his hairs were grown as eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.' But he became the Great King again when the crisis of his malady passed, and,

after his cure, he never again boasted of his power nor regarded himself as greater than other men.

"Great was Nebuchadnezzar and greater still was Babylon, yet, greater than either was the shadow of the Curse of Isaiah that hung over it, blacker and blacker.

"When Nebuchadnezzar died, his son, Evil-Merodach, took the throne and reigned for two short years. He soon found, as many a son of a great monarch has done, that there is nothing in the world more difficult than to continue another's greatness. An implicit obedience to royal orders which had been secured by the personal renown of the Great King could only be purchased by his successor. Nebuchadnezzar's greatness had cost his country untold millions of treasure, and, like a ball started rolling down-hill, the expense of maintaining these costly palaces and temples, of repairing the immense and complicated irrigation projects, commenced to swamp the nation. Evil-Merodach knew no way to stem the tide save by increasing the taxes of the people and enlarging the tribute upon the surrounding nations. This policy gave rise to civil conspiracies at home and revolts abroad. Upon the death of Evil-Merodach several usurpers sought the throne of Baby-

lon. Political misrule wrenched the city in sunder. Civil war emptied the treasuries which should have been devoted to holding the empire together.

"It had been the Medes and the Persians who had aided Nabopolassar to free Babylon from the tyranny of Assyria. Now the peoples who were subject to Babylon called on the aid of Media and Persia to free them from their new taskmasters.

"The Curse still held, of which part ran: 'Make bright the arrows, gather the shields; the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, for His device is against Babylon to destroy it.'

"By this time Belshazzar, son of the usurper Nabu-nahid, was on the throne, but Belshazzar, brought up in luxury as one of the nobles of Babylon, had neither had the diplomatic training for a king nor yet the camp life and stern administration needed for a military leader, such as that under which Nebuchadnezzar had spent his early life. Caught in the vicious belief which demands extravagance lest economy be regarded as a sign of weakness, Belshazzar not only made the mistake of raising the taxes still higher, not only added to that the error of levying higher tributes

from the surrounding tribes, but he also made an enemy of Cyrus the Great, King of Persia.

"Either Belshazzar ignored or he had forgotten that the Curse named Cyrus as one of the principal agents for the destruction of Babylon: 'To Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.'

"Then, David, came that night, one of the most dramatic in history, one of the strangest in the history of war, the night when Babylon was taken. That night, in the midst of her pomp and glory, the finger of the Curse touched the empire of Babylon and blasted it. There, David," and the old archæologist pointed with his finger, "is the mound beneath the dust of which lie the scattered bricks and ruined walls of Belshazzar's Palace. On the very spot where that jackal is now howling dismally, the famous feast was held on the night which turned into that night of terror."

And, taking from his pocket a small edition of the Old Testament, the old scholar read the story of a night before which even St. Bartholomew's Eve pales in horror:

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a

thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded that there be brought the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the Temple which was in Jerusalem, and the king and his princes drank in them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

"In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

"Then the king's countenance was changed and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed and his knees smote one against the other. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers. And the king spake and said unto the wise men of Babylon:

" 'Whoever shall read this writing and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.'

"Then came in all the king's wise men, but they could not read the writing, nor show to the

king the interpretation thereof. Then was King Belshazzar greatly troubled and his countenance was changed in him. His lords, also, were astonished.

"Now the queen, by reason of the word of the king and of his lords, came into the banquet house, and the queen spake and said:

" 'O King, live forever! Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let they countenance be changed. There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and, in the days of thy father (predecessor), light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and the soothsayers . . . now let Daniel be called and he will show the interpretation.'

"Then was Daniel brought in before the king.

"And the king spake and said unto Daniel:

" 'Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, which the king, my father (predecessor) brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been

brought in before me that they should read this writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of thee that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts. Now, if thou canst read the writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about thy neck and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.'

"Then Daniel answered and said unto the king:

" 'Let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another!

" 'Yet I will read the writing unto the king and make known unto him the interpretation.

" 'O thou King! The Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor. And, for the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.

" 'But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened with pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from

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BIRD-MAN AND BEDOUIN.

The "ship of the desert" has no chance against the ship of the sky, while musket or scimitar is powerless against bomb and machine-gun.

him. He was driven from the sons of men and his heart was made like the wild beasts and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen and his body was wet with the dews of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

" 'But thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted thyself against the Lord of Heaven, and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee. Thou and thy lords have drunk wine in them and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. . . . Then was the part of the hand sent by Him and this writing was written.

" 'And this is the writing that was written—Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.

" 'This is the interpretation of the thing:

" 'Mene—God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it!

" 'Tekel—Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting!

" 'Peres (Upharsin)—Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians!'

"And, David," the old scholar continued, "even at the very time that the bold Hebrew prince was standing before the king announcing the destruction of his kingdom, by secret tunnels and passages under the palace and throughout the city, the soldiers of Cyrus were creeping in. By stratagem and treachery, the waters of the Euphrates had been diverted from their main channels, and up the oozy bottoms, into the water-gates the invaders came.[1]

"True to his oath, Belshazzar called for the robe of scarlet and the chain of gold, but, before the conclusion of the feast, the Persian soldiers rushed in. Grim and great was the slaughter in that banquet-hall, and in that night was Belshazzar slain. The Persians commenced an indiscriminate massacre which lasted all the next day, and so great was the rage of the Persian soldiery that Cyrus issued an edict to the inhabitants that they should keep to their houses and bade his cavalry slay only those who were found out on the streets. Just eighty-eight years of glory and of pride had been permitted to Babylon. The Golden City was fallen and her people slain by the

[1] The author is aware that the Annals-Cylinder gives a different version, but he does not consider that it contradicts the version in the Book of Daniel.

sword. Thrown from her high estate, Babylon became a Persian province.

"The Curse was falling!

"But a great and populous city, my boy, favorably situated for trade and commerce, which, for nearly a century, had been the center of the ancient world, could not become an utter desolation in a day, merely because it had been conquered. Babylon had changed rulers many times before. There was much of the Curse still to be fulfilled.

"The Babylonians, proud of their ancient fame, and with military leaders among the nobles who belonged to the old fighting Assyrian stock, refused to remain supine under the heel of Cyrus. They revolted against the Persian dominion, drove out the invaders and secured their independence anew. A pretender, calling himself Nebuchadnezzar II, took the throne. Darius, the ninth Achemenian king of Persia, and son of Hytaspes, set out to retake the city.

"Darius was a famous warrior, but thanks to the strength of its massive walls, Babylon resisted the siege for twenty months before the Persians were victorious. Then, in order that the Babylonians might not be tempted to revolt again, Darius ordered his army to destroy the famous

walls which had been the city's pride. Just as Cyrus had robbed Babylon of her strength as a royal center, so Darius took away her renown as a fortified place. He was eager to plunder the city, but was afraid of provoking the people.

"The Curse was thus twice fallen, but Babylon still remained a powerful city, with enormous wealth and treasure in her temples. The great Temple of Bel or Tower of Babel remained untouched, together with its great golden statue, the value of which was said to be equal to fifty years of tribute from one of the richest provinces.

"But empires come and go, and victory never rests long in the hands of an autocratic power. Cyrus had made Persia the mistress of the world. Yet on the isles and the mainland of Greece there was developing a power which should give the world a new civilization, a power which dared even to defy the hosts of Persia.

"True, Greece was far outside the boundaries of Persia, but Xerxes, son of Darius, whose capital was at Persepolis, deemed himself King of Kings, and could not endure that any people should defy him. This was the same Xerxes (Ahasuerus) who married the Jewish maiden Esther, and made her his queen. Twenty-nine

years after the destruction of the wall of Babylon by Darius, the Persians, under Xerxes, marched against the Greeks. The campaign was disastrous and the Persians retreated to their own country, vanquished and impoverished. In order to replenish his exhausted coffers, Xerxes sent a powerful force to Babylon, plundered the city, demolished the Temple of Bel, carried off the gods of gold and the treasures of that marvelous structure.

"Thus came about the words of the Curse which said: 'Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.'

"The royal glory of Babylon was gone, her great walls were thrown down, her gods disgraced and her wealth taken away, yet the Curse was not all fulfilled.

"The Persian Empire had been great, greater even than the Babylonian. The conquest of Lydia had placed all the wealth of Crœsus in Persian hands, the conquests in India had given them control of Asia's vast resources. Yet the Persians had failed to defeat the Greeks and it was from north of Greece that there came upon the scene one of the most extraordinary generals

of history, the Napoleon of the ancient world.

"Alexander the Great of Macedon, with a wave of conquest that was like a living fire, swept the known world from north to south, from east to west. He it was who wept 'that there were no worlds left to conquer.' He carried his victories from the Balkan States to India, and Babylon came within his grasp.

"As great a strategist as he was a warrior, Alexander saw at once the importance of Babylon, situated upon what had once been a fertile plain, upon the main highway between the east and west. He realized that it was ideally placed for the capital of a great empire, and he determined to make Babylon even greater than it had been in the famous days of Nebuchadnezzar. Remembering that the strength of the city had lain in its walls—for being a city of the plains there was no natural strength in its position—he set thousands of his soldiers and tens of thousands of prisoners and slaves to the task of clearing away the ruins of the walls which Darius had thrown down.

"But there are things so vast as almost to be beyond human power. Though Alexander hastened his return from India in order personally to

supervise the work of rebuilding Babylon, he was compelled to admit that a whole summer's work produced so little impression upon the ruins that the project of rebuilding the wall had to be abandoned. Babylon's riches and power had been due largely to her irrigation canals, but Alexander the Great, with all his power, could not restore what Time had commenced to efface. He fought harder to rebuild Babylon than he had done to conquer the world, but he stayed in Babylon not to conquer, but to die. The waters of the Euphrates, no longer controlled, had spread into malaria-breeding marshes.

"The Curse still hung over Babylon. On the scene of his triumph, in the midst of his labors, before ever a section of the wall was built or a new palace erected, Alexander was smitten with a fever and died in his thirty-second year.

"Thus dying young, he founded no dynasty. There was no one to consolidate by the arts of peace the empire which had been gained by the sword. Upon the conqueror's death, his vast possessions fell to pieces. His generals quarreled among themselves for the partition of the empire and Mesopotamia was seized by Seleucus Nicator. That rude soldier and captain of war

had little longing for the luxury of Babylon, and was wise enough to see that he could not hope to succeed where his great master had failed. The immensity of the task of rebuilding Babylon had staggered Alexander, it frightened Seleucus. He abandoned Babylon and built a new city at Seleucia, a day's march away.

"Heavier and heavier grew the Curse. With the royal capital entirely removed, the court, the nobles, and the merchant princes followed the king to the new capital, and Babylon fell still further from her high estate. All the leading citizens of Babylon were gone. She was no longer even the capital of a province, but a half-ruined, half-abandoned city, which even the caravans shunned in favor of the capital. Trade ebbed away, the streets grew more and more deserted, until only a few Babylonian patriots and the unchanging priests made their homes in the empty and echoing houses, falling into dust on every side.

"Built as they were of sun-baked bricks, the mighty works of Nebuchadezzar needed constant repair. The throwing down of the walls had choked the great moat which was an integral part of the complicated system of irrigation canals that

watered the plain. The dams by which the great reservoirs were made to hold the spring floods, broke down under neglect. Lacking the royal power to order hundreds of slaves to the task, the few remaining people of Babylon could not rebuild the dams nor clear away the ditches which had been choked up. The torrential rains of the spring and the parching winds of the desert at one time broke down the banks and at another time filled up the channels. The fields that had been covered with waving grain now became parched and dry, the low-lands, which had been drained with ditches, now became reedy marsh.

"Under the Curse, Babylon was beginning to become but 'desolate heaps.'

"The descendants of Seleucus, finding that the Mediterranean coasts were more important than the Euphrates, owing to the westward movement of civilization, moved their capital from Seleucia to Antioch, and Babylon was left still farther from the hum of the world's affairs. But the Seleucidæ, like those who had gone before them, were doomed to fall. Arsaces, the founder, and Mithridates, the first king, founded the Parthian Empire, and a new capital was built at Ecbatana.

"Yet, distant though Babylon was from the

march of the world's events, it could never be forgotten. The Parthian kings, who lived in alternate vassalage and hostility to Rome, determined to show their hold over Mesopotamia, and as a symbol of their power, they turned the enclosure of Babylon into a hunting park, and spent large sums for the gathering in of wild animals from all parts of the world with which to stock their royal game preserve.

"As the Curse had foretold, 'wild beasts of the deserts' and 'wild beasts of the islands' began to make their home there.

"Then came the power of Rome. Though her wars with Parthia lasted for centuries and though Antony once suffered a terrible defeat, sooner or later the Roman legions were bound to conquer. The Emperor Trajan assumed the added title of King of Parthia, and a Roman army under Cassius razed Seleucia to the ground. What is Seleucia now? It is but a mound, my boy, a mere heap of dust, as yet unexcavated, unexplored. Nothing is to be seen but an undulating heap of sand. It may contain great treasure, it may hold secrets that will unlock many of the mysteries of history. What lies under that sand? No one knows.

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BOYS OF THE DESERT.

"During the Roman and Parthian wars, the desert city of Palmyra secured a short but brilliant fame. A purely Arab city, proud of her merchant princes, she controlled nearly all the trade of the northern deserts. All caravans passed through her gates and this deflected still further the world's attention from the once Golden City on the Euphrates. But, when Queen Zenobia felt herself strong enough to defy Rome, Palmyra met with the same fate as many cities of the East, and now a forest of columns in the sand is all that tells of the rich, fierce life that once flourished there.

" 'Centuries passed,' " the old scholar continued, reading a passage copied into one of his note-books,[1] " 'Rome rose to preëminence and declined, while the fires that the prophet Zoroaster had kindled in the hearts of the Persian peoples, kept alive in them a consciousness of race and a will to live. It was in the third century of the Christian era that the family of Sassanid arose to the east of the Mesopotamian Rivers, and, by an inspired revival among the Persian tribes, succeeded in establishing the Sassanian Empire.

[1] "The War in the Cradle of the World," by Eleanor Franklin Egan (Harper & Bros.).

"'For a capital, the Sassanian kings built the city of Ctesiphon on the forever strategically valuable shortest highway between the two rivers, immediately opposite the fallen city of Seleucia. The Arch of Ctesiphon is all that is left of the great audience-hall of the emperor Khusrau (Chosroes). It dates from about the sixth century. It is one of the largest and most extraordinary ruins in the world and is so massively and amazingly built that one looks around and about over the naked desert in the midst of which it stands and wonders how a city whose builders were so great could possibly disappear from the face of the earth. . . . The Sassanian Empire was overthrown in the middle of the seventh century by the irresistible cohorts of the Caliphs, and Bagdad, in its turn, came to be founded as a great capital in the Cradle of the World.'

"Yet, each in their turn, Persepolis, Seleucia, Ecbatana, Rome, Ctesiphon and Bagdad, each in their turn, carried on from place to place and from century to century, the treasures that had been amassed by Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, the Golden City. And, century by century, the floods beat upon the ruins of Babylon, and the sand of the desert blew upon Babylon, and the armies of

Time trampled upon Babylon, till it disintegrated into dust and was buried in oblivion.

"The Empire of the Caliphs is gone and the Turk has come. The time is ripe for the Ottoman Empire to fall, but Turkey, from first to last, has ignored Babylon and left Mesopotamia alone. Turkish power has never held this land, save as a tributary state, and the power of the Crescent is wearing very thin. What country next will be the master of Babylon is a mystery held in the hands of the future. But the Curse is finished, fulfilled to the uttermost. Babylon has become desolate and the wild beasts alone make their homes in it."

Dark had fallen and the stars were beginning to shine as the archæologist finished. He was about to rise and give the order to advance to the camp, when the Arab stayed him with a gesture.

"Forget not the old prophecy," he said, and quoted anew:

" 'When the wings of the morning fly from the west to the east, then shall the Two Rivers bow to the will of men and the fields of Babylon be green again.' "

"That's the same as saying never," retorted David. "The sun isn't going to start to rise in the west, just to make good an old prophecy!"

"Don't be too sure, my boy," warned the old scholar. "You see here, in the darkness, the ruins of Golden Babylon. The Curse is fully come. The Arab, who is not afraid of the most inhospitable desert, will not pitch his tent here, the shepherd will not fold his sheep here, the ruins are full of wild beasts and all the homes are desolate and solitary. In the night it is given up to creatures of the darkness and the Arabs believe that specters move about the mounds; by day it is abandoned to burning sun and the dust-clouds.

"Empires come and go, centuries come and go. The roar of life fills the ear in the cities of the West, but the silence of mystery broods over the cities of the East.

"You're an American, David, my boy, and you can't escape your racial inheritance which makes you ready to disbelieve everything. But, if you've a grain of sense, don't forget that there are many things in this world which cannot be explained. The world is not a problem in arithmetic, it is full of mystery and wonder. Remember Babylon and the never-lifted curse!"

"Yet the Curse will lift," said Ibrahim.

"By what means?" queried the archæologist.

"By war, O man of Peace!" the Arab answered.

"War?"

"War! Only by war can the wings of the morning speed from the west to the east!"

CHAPTER II

BLACK TREACHERY

As they rode back to the camp among the dust-choked ditches that encircle Babylon, where the temporary quarters of the expedition had been pitched, the archæologist drew his horse close beside that of David, and said, speaking in a low tone and in English:

"Did you notice how Ibrahim spoke of the war?"

"Yes, Father," answered the boy, wondering what was coming.

"That means trouble," the old scholar declared, in a troubled voice.

"How?"

"Have you ever heard an Arab tell his plans before he was ready to have them known?" came the retort. "When a Bedouin speaks of war, you may be sure that war is not far away."

"You mean the Great War will come here?"

"I'm afraid so," his father replied. "When I

went to Bagdad ten days ago, I heard from an Armenian merchant living there that the German attack on France had failed, that the Kaiser had been defeated and thrown back at the River Marne near Paris, that the Austrians were being heavily punished by Russia and that England absolutely controlled the sea."

"That looks as if the war were over, not just beginning," commented David.

"I don't think so," the archæologist replied; "rather it looks to me like a long war. And, unless I miss my guess, the secret alliance between Germany and Turkey will bring the Ottoman Empire into the fray."

"I don't see where that will hurt us," said the boy. "The United States isn't going to get into the scrap, anyway. We're neutral."

"Yes, but in the Orient, who will believe it?" his father questioned. "The Arabs class all foreigners, all Europeans, anyway, as Franji. And if once the desert tribes get stirred up they won't make any difference between Americans and Europeans. You ought to know that."

"I suppose that's so," agreed the boy thoughtfully.

David realized the danger at once. From the

time that he was quite a little shaver, until his eleventh year, the boy had lived either in Syria or Mesopotamia, his father being continually engaged in supervising the work of excavating the ancient monuments of the East for an American Exploration Fund. Hence, though he had spent the three preceding years in an American school in the small town in the Middle West where his mother lived, her health having been broken down by several years' residence in the East, David not only knew Arabic as well as he did English, but he also understood the Arab temperament as well as or even better than he did that of his own people.

"Shall we have to chuck up the work?" he asked.

"I will not abandon my excavation until I am absolutely compelled," the archæologist replied grimly, "though the influence of Uncle Sam amounts to very little as far away from home as this. That's where the English, French, and German Exploration Funds have had a great advantage over us. The German camp, working at the farther end of the ruins, has many opportunities denied to us. The Turk is accustomed to dealing with the Great Powers of Europe, but he hardly

knows anything about America. However, we'll hope for the best. But I tell you frankly, David, I have my fears. An Arab never speaks idly."

Events soon proved the archæologist to be in the right. Within three or four days, the laborers engaged in the excavation began to grow restless. Two disappeared one morning, the next day three were gone. They did not even wait to ask for their wages due, a very grave sign.

Three days later Ibrahim came early to the headquarters' tent, just as the start was to be made for the excavations, and, seating himself upon the ground, after the customary salutations, he began:

"I have been told, O Man of Peace, that the sea is as wide as the desert."

"It is wider," the archæologist replied.

"And your country is upon the other side of the sea?"

"It is."

"It will be a long journey," the Bedouin remarked and lapsed into silence.

When he had left the archæoloist turned to David.

"This is a definite warning," he said. "Ibrahim is our friend. I only hope that I have not

waited too long. You must leave here at once, David. You know the way to Basra and the British authorities will look after you there. I'll give you a letter to an American merchant I know in Basra, Ferguson by name. He has great influence in the place. You had better be ready to start tomorrow."

"But you, Father?" the boy queried, "what will you do?"

"I shall stay here," the archæologist replied. "If I am compelled to leave, of course I shall have to go also, but I won't leave important excavation work for a mere rumor. That does not justify me, however, in keeping you here."

"I'll stay, too," said the boy, "I don't want to clear out just because there's danger."

"You will do as you are told," the archæologist returned quietly, and though David's recent three years in America had made him resentful of discipline and inclined to his own opinion, he knew that there was no gainsaying his father's order. The old scholar had commanded men for many years, and though he was gentle, he did not allow his authority to be questioned.

On arriving at the ruins of Babylon, ready for the day's work, David noticed the workmen gath-

ered around the figure of a dervish, whose short spear, ornamented with red and green ribbons round the base of the blade, stuck in the ground near him, told of his calling. He wore only a white, flowing robe with a leather belt. In his hand was the Mehjané, a short rod of almond wood, which is said to have the power of healing the sick and driving away serpents.

David unobservedly made his way to the edge of the group.

"It is known to all believers," the dervish was saying, "that when Allah created the first angel, he was so enormous that he had 70,000 heads, and each head had 70,000 faces, each face 70,000 mouths and each mouth 70,000 tongues. Each tongue could speak 70,000 languages, and every time that the name of Allah was pronounced by one of these tongues, a new angel was created. Thus were the heavens peopled.

"Then Allah created Adam, who was as tall as a palm-tree, and Eve, who was very beautiful. He ordered the angels to worship Adam, but the Jân, the children of the angel Eblis, refused, so they were turned out of heaven and made to dwell on the islands of the earth, with the Franji and other unbelievers."

David stiffened in his attention. At the beginning he had thought the dervish to be merely reciting one of the many stories of the Koran. But David had heard many of the stories from the Koran, indeed, he knew the sacred book of the Mohammedans even better than he did the Bible, and he realized that this reference to the "Franji" or foreigners, denoted that the dervish had another motive. The tale, then, had a political and probably a sinister purpose. The dervish continued:

"The Jân were put under the control of Solomon. Peace be to him! They were ordered by Allah to work under the orders of the Great King's seal, and how could Solomon have built the temple, the pillars, the molten sea, and his palaces without their help? So severe was he that when Azrael, the Angel of Death, cut short Solomon's days, as he was sitting leaning on his stick, he remained in the position of an overseer for forty years, although he was dead, and had not a worm gnawed through the stick, causing the dead king to fall down, the Jân would never have known what had happened and would have continued their work.

"When 'Esa (Jesus) son of Mary—to Whom

be prayers and peace—was on earth, the Jân in a group of seven took possession of Mary Magdalene and were driven out by Him. Of course, some were converted to Judaism, others to Christianity, and when the Prophet (Mohammed)—to whom be prayers and peace—was reading the Koran at daybreak under a palm-tree, seven Jewish Jân became Moslems. They lived here for many years, in ruined Babylon and in Nineveh. By and by they approached and followed in the traces of mankind. They tried to enter Paradise again, but were repelled by falling stars, which we still see.[1]

"But the Jân are growing fat and wicked in these days and those who inhabited the islands of the sea are daring the vengeance of Allah and coming into the lands of the True Believers. They are inspiring men to dig in the graves of the men of old, in order that spirits of power which have been long buried by the will of Allah should join their wicked power."

The dervish struck his foot upon the ground.

"Why was this city of old fallen into ruins? It was the will of Allah! Why should the graves of

[1] "The Immovable East," by Philip J. Baldensperger (Small, Maynard & Co.).

houses and of the places of the dead be desecrated by the Franji? It is because the Jân are defying the will of Allah! Already the anger of the Sultan, the servant of the Prophet, is being stirred up against the abominations of the Franji, who, by sorceries and pretense of knowledge make believe to read the writing of these ancient cities and to prove thereby that once they belonged to them. Let the true believers keep from making friends with the Jân and with the Franji, the friends of the Jân!"

A low murmur of frantic rage ran around the group of Moslem listeners.

David waited to hear no more, but slipped back to his father and recounted what he had heard.

The archæologist looked grave.

"This is the beginning," he said. "I had heard that the Sultan of Turkey intended to proclaim a Jehad, or Holy War."

"Mohammedans against Christians?" queried the boy.

"More exactly, Islam against all the world," the old scholar answered.

"But has the Sultan of Turkey the right to do that?" asked David. "It doesn't look like it

down here. The Arabs seem to hate the Turks far more than they do us. Can he call the Bedouin to his standard?"

The archæologist pondered for a moment.

"Yes," he said at last, "the Sultan of Turkey has the right to summon a Holy War, that is, provided he can secure the support of the ulemas or leading spirits of the Mohammedan religion. He is officially styled the 'Commander of the Faithful,' and the Caliph of Islam. For centuries that power was held by the Caliphate of Bagdad, and later by Cairo, by Damascus and by Constantinople.

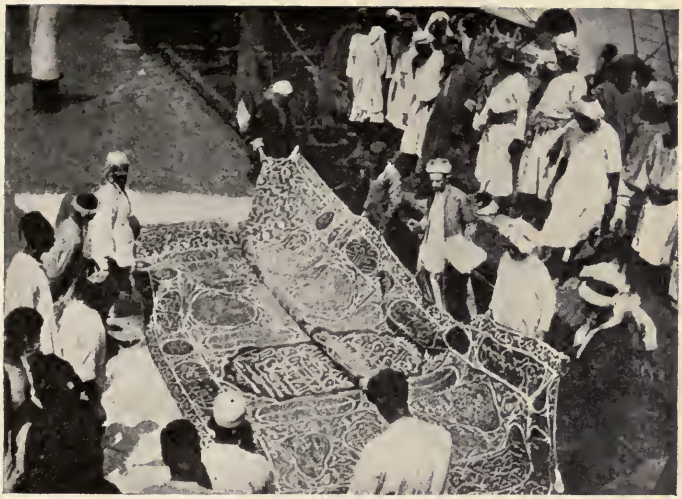
"But you will never really understand the difficult position of the Sultan," the old scholar continued, "unless you bear in mind that the Mohammedan religion is broken asunder into two sects, each more bitter enemies of the other than they are even of the Christians. These are the Sunis and the Shiahs. The original split occurred over the question of the successorship to the leadership after the death of Mohammed.

"The Sunis acknowledge the succession of the first four Caliphs and of the Sultan of Turkey to the headship of the Mohammedan Church. And,

as you know, the Muntafik Arabs are Suni. Likely enough that dervish who is inflaming the Arabs over yonder is a Muntafik.

"The Shiahs deny the succession of the first four Caliphs and recognize as the true heir of the Prophet the Iman Ali, who married Fatima, Mohammed's daughter. Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein started a revolt against the Caliphs and were killed. They are the Shiah martyrs. The Shiahs, therefore—which include nearly all the peoples of Mohammedan India—regard the Sultan of Turkey not only as a usurper to a throne but also as a profane claimant of a holy office.

"For this reason, David, I do not think there is sufficient cause to fear a Holy War if the edict is issued by the Sultan of Turkey. In the first place, half the Mohammedan world would be against him, and, in the second place, it is one of the main articles of the Mohammedan creed that no action can be taken in the name of the Prophet which cannot be justified by the writings of the Prophet. A Holy War would have to be directed against England, and, as is well known, the British Empire has been the kindest, the most tolerant, and the most understanding over-lord that any Mohammedan country has ever known."



THE HOLY CARPET, WHICH DRAPES MOHAMMED'S TOMB AT MECCA.

From "Sphere": U. S. Copyright, N. Y. Herald Co.

THE SACRED MAHMAL CAMEL, PRESENTED BY THE BRITISH ARMY.

"Where do Mecca and Medina come in?" asked David. "Are they Suni or Shiah?"

"Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, being shrines connected with Mohammed himself, are sacred to both sects. Throughout the whole Mohammedan world, it is the pilgrimage to Mecca which most insures respect, and even a certain admission to Heaven. But, in addition to these, the Shiahs prize the shrines of Kerbela and Nejef which contain respectively the tombs of the martyr Al-Hussein, and the sacred shrine of Ali."

"Kerbela is right near here, isn't it?" queried David.

"Less than twenty miles away," the archæologist replied, "and Nejef is only fifty miles away on the main pilgrim route to Mecca. Small wonder, then, that this should be a Shiah stronghold."

"Then why can't we go ahead with our work?"

The archæologist shook his head.

"From what you've heard from the dervish," he said, "it is sure that the authorities would stop excavation, and, as you know, all official permission comes from the Turks, not from the Arabs. If the Jehad is proclaimed, no one would undertake the work. It would only be inviting trouble. Even the Nestorian Christians, of whom there are

a good many among our laborers, would quit work in order to avoid giving the Turks an excuse for massacre.

"It is better for us to take the first step in the matter. Go, David, and find Ibrahim. Tell him that a week's holiday is to be given to the laborers and that no work need be done to-day. By that means, we shall avoid giving an order which is disobeyed, a fatal thing in dealing with Eastern peoples. That done, ask him to come to me."

David hurried on his quest and soon found Ibrahim, surrounded by a group of workers. The boy delivered his message. An appreciative gleam flashed into the Arab's eyes.

"It is well, Daoud," he said. "Tell the Man of Peace, your father, that the tools of work will be laid aside."

Later in the morning the dervish came to the little tent pitched near the ruins, at the door of which the archæologist sat, quietly smoking.

"Good morning, O Man of Peace!" said the dervish.

"A hundred mornings with peace," the archæologist replied.

The archæologist then silently held out his tobacco pouch, and the dervish filled his long pipe.

"May it always be full," he said, as he handed it back gratefully.

"Even as your voice has said," the archæologist replied, continuing the system of compliments characteristic of the East.

The pipes filled, the archæologist struck a match and handed it to the dervish.

"May you never know its evil!" he said, as he gave the match.

"Nor you its heat!" the dervish responded, as he put it to the bowl of his pipe and began to smoke.

After a long pause, there was a further interchange of compliments, and nothing further was said until the pipes were filled a second time.

Finally, the archæologist hazarded the remark:

"It is written: 'The words of the wise men are as gold thrice refined.' "

To which the dervish replied:

"In the name of Allah, the All-Compassionate!"

And the American, understanding the dervish was about to explain the meaning of his visit, bent forward in attention.

"One day," the dervish began, "when the Prophet—on whom be prayers and peace—was

sitting beneath the shadow of a date palm, there came to him Abu Dib (the brown bear) shuffling painfully along upon swollen and blistered feet. To whom the Prophet said:

"'Abu Dib, why are your feet so swollen?'

"And Abu Dib replied:

"'The sands of the desert are hot and the way is very long.'

"Then said the Prophet:

"'What thought sent the feet of Abu Dib to tread the long hot ways of the desert?'

"And Abu Dib replied:

"'To look upon the servant of Allah.'

"And the Prophet answered:

"'To seek wisdom is well, to satisfy curiosity without gain therein is foolishness. Those who walk in ways other than those which Allah has made for their feet must suffer pain.'

"And from that day onward, O Man of Peace, Abu Dib has always walked clumsily upon flat feet."

The archæologist looked the dervish straight in the eyes and the other returned his glance squarely. The threat was a definite one, that the archæologist should not continue his work, though couched in story form, and the American knew

that the dervish would never have gone so far as to suggest that danger threatened him unless he had received definite instructions.

After a pause, the American answered, throwing his answer into the allegorical style most favored in the East:

"O dervish, it is written," he said, " 'that he who will not hear wisdom may be smitten with a stick.' It is told of a wise man in our country that one day, wandering in the fields, he found a hive of wild bees, from which the honey was running out upon the ground.

"Full of wonder at this, for he knew well that the hives of the wild bee do not suffer the honey to escape, the wise man stepped closer and found that the cells in which the bees were storing their honey were round, and since round cells do not fit together, the cells broke easily and the contents were spilled.

"So the wise man picked up one of the bees in his hand and said to her:

" 'Little Friend, why do you build your cells with round walls? Do you not see that they break down easily?'

"And the bee answered:

" 'Yes, Master, but our mothers built them in

the shape of pyramids, and they broke even more easily.'

"Then said the wise man:

" 'Take me to a hive of your mothers.'

"So the young bee flew to a bank near by, and there the wise man saw a hive with cells like a pyramid. From it, the honey was leaking also.

"So the wise man took a bee from the second hive and said:

" 'Little Friend, why do you build your cells with pyramidal walls? Do you not see that they break easily?'

"And that bee answered:

" 'Yes, Master, but our mothers built them in squares and they broke also.'

"Then said the wise man:

" 'Take me to a hive of your mothers.'

"So the young bee flew to a hollow tree, and there the wise men saw a hive with cells like square chests. From it the honey was leaking also.

"So the wise man took a bee from the third hive and said:

" 'Little Friend, why do you build your cells like chests? Do you not see that they break easily?'

"And that bee answered:

" 'Yes, Master, but our mothers built them with five sides, and they could not be fitted together so that much honey was lost.'

"Then said the wise man:

" 'Take me to a hive of your mothers.'

"So the young bee flew to a hole in the rock, and there the wise man saw a hive with five-sided cells. From it the honey was leaking also.

"So the wise man took a bee from the fourth hive and said:

" 'Little Friend, why do you build your cells with five sides? Do you not see that they do not fit together well and that much honey is lost?'

"And the bee answered:

" 'Yes, Master, but we know no other way. Our mothers came from far away, and when they came to build a hive they determined to break away from the old customs of the country they had left behind and build their hives with five sides. What the old way was, we do not know. Since then our children have tried many forms, but none are perfect, though there is a belief that in that land far away, the hives were perfect and the honey never leaked away.'

"Then the wise man smiled and said:

"'Little Friend, it happens often that the young can learn from the old. In yonder tree which you see growing far up towards the hills, you will find a hive of bees who build their cells of six sides, even as your ancestors used to do. Learn from them and your hives will be perfect again.'

"It is often well to search in the former homes of great men who lived before us to learn how they accomplished things which are now forgotten. The Bedouins are great, yet they could not rebuild Babylon."

This was a declaration of intention to continue the excavation work.

There was another pause, and then the dervish rose.

"The followers of the Prophet are as the grains of sand upon the desert for number," he said, "and if the winds of the desert stir them, who can resist the storm?"

The threat was open and definite now, but the archæologist continued smoking, and replied placidly:

"The traveler upon the desert awaits until he sees the sandstorm before he lies down and covers his head with his mantle."

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THE IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS IN A SAND-STORM.

Not even military discipline and civilized skill can tame the desert; it claims its victims still. (Sketch by an officer.)

The dervish sniffed the air.

"I feel the hot wind of the desert," he answered, "and the sands are beginning to stir."

And, with a profound obeisance, he strode away to the camp of the laborers and was not seen again.

David came forward from the inner portion of the tent, where he had been listening.

"How much time have we got ahead of us, Father, do you suppose?" he asked.

The old archæologist looked at the boy thoughtfully.

"Not long, I'm afraid," he said.

"What will they do to us?"

The old scholar's eyes narrowed.

"Moslem fanaticism is a dangerous thing," he answered.

After a pause he spoke again.

"David," he said, "you remember where we buried that little tablet of Babylonian inscriptions, set with jewels?"

"Yes," answered the lad.

"Late this afternoon, you had better take your rifle as a blind to your movements and stroll over in that direction. Dig up the tablet and bring it back in your game-bag."

"All right, Father. Why did you bury it, anyhow?"

"When we got permission from Constantinople to work in these mounds," the archæologist answered, "one of the conditions was that gold or treasure should be turned over to the Turkish government. The gems worked into the enamel which surrounds the cuneiform inscription might be regarded as treasure, and the tablet is much too important historically for me to allow it to run the risk of being lost. If I go to dig it up, I shall be watched, and, if there is talk of a Jehad, even Ibrahim cannot be trusted. You are far less likely to be followed. You are sure you remember where it is?"

"Sure," replied David positively. "It's by a small lump of ground between three big tussocks of grass, just where, by standing on the top of the lump, you can see the 'fiery furnace' mosque, on a line with the outer end of the Sheik's date-palms to the northeast."

"Exactly," returned his father, nodding satisfaction. "Don't be too late. Get back before dark, for sure. By that time I'll have planned the best means for your escape to-night."

Accordingly, after the siesta following the mid-

day meal, David took his rifle and his game-bag and started out towards the marshes, through the camel-thorn, in the quest for sand-grouse or black partridge. The boy was a good shot and his gun did a great deal toward keeping the camp supplied with food. Game was a welcome change from the interminable strong-flavored mutton provided by the Arabs.

Towards evening, his game-bag more than half-filled, David sauntered, as though carelessly, homewards in the direction of the mosque that crowned the mound where once Nebuchadnezzar had built a fiery furnace, and where the escape of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego was said to have changed the feelings of the Great King.

But, as he drew near to the mound, David was amazed to see two figures in the distance, which looked strangely familiar. He rubbed his eyes, thinking he saw a mirage.

In the far distance, but discernible to his clear young eyesight, he saw, or seemed to see, his father and himself walking toward him.

There was nothing strange in the figure of his father approaching the place, for David knew that the archæologist expected him to be there about

that time. But how did the figure of himself get there?

Undoubtedly mirage.

But—he himself was still, crouching in the shadow of a mound, while this other figure that seemed to be himself was advancing! David knew well enough that while a mirage magnifies small objects, and may make things which are scores of miles away seem nearer, it cannot create an image. He, David, was crouching on the ground, motionless. The figure in the distance that resembled him was walking.

He moved his hand. There was no corresponding movement in the advancing figure.

Although his early life in the East had made David at one time as superstitious as any Arab boy, his recent three years in an American school had purged him of a great many beliefs in phantoms and spirits. Besides, there was something very substantial in his apparent double.

Moreover, while the other figure looked like his father, the walk seemed to be different. The archæologist usually walked with a quick step leaning forward. The advancing figure had a solid and heavy tread.

The two figures came nearer. They were not

specters, for their shadows were strongly thrown by the afternoon sun.

There was no longer any doubt of it. Just so sure as that the figure purporting to be David was not the boy, so it was sure that the other figure was not the archæologist.

Nearer and nearer they came and David noted that their direction was not for the mound behind which he was crouching, but that they seemed to be going directly to the "fiery furnace" mound, on the top of which stood the little mosque.

An unexplained feeling of pending danger impelled David suddenly to get to his feet.

The moment the others saw him, they halted. From their gestures the boy could see that they were consulting together. But, after a few minutes, they came on again, evidently making towards the mosque-crowned mound.

Again that presentiment of danger struck David, and without quite knowing why he did it, he turned and ran sharply to the top of the mound, taking up a stand close by the open door of the mosque.

As the others followed and came still nearer, David recognized them. They were two assistants from the German camp, which had been en-

gaged at excavating part of the ruins of Babylon eight or ten miles away.

David waited for them to come close.

Then the taller of the two, who was impersonating the archæologist, said to the boy, in Arabic:

"Stand back!"

The arrogant air of authority irritated David. There had never been any love lost between the two scientific camps, and more than once valuable discoveries made by the Americans had been stolen and had reappeared in the German collection. Also, there had been a more or less constant struggle with laborers, the Germans perpetually sowing distrust of all peoples but themselves among the Arab tribes.

Accordingly David, without budging a step, replied with the question:

"Why?"

"Stand back," the elder of the two repeated, advancing as though to enter the mosque.

In a flash David saw the whole plot. The Germans had dressed themselves up to look like the two Americans, they planned to desecrate the mosque by entering it, and, possibly, committing some sacrilege therein—a thing sure to arouse the hatred and fanaticism of the Arabs—and, if mur-

der were done, there would be no evidence of German complicity. Realizing that such a foul plot imbroiled his father as much as himself, the lad stood firm.

"You're not going to come in here," retorted the boy defiantly.

The elder German deliberately produced a revolver.

"Stand back," he said, "or I shall fire and drag your body in and leave it on the mosque floor. Nothing is so defiling as the dead."

He smiled sardonically.

"In that case, I do not think that Moslem Arabs will permit any more excavations, and your father will be lucky if he escapes with his life."

The dilemma was a serious one to the boy. He was armed only with a shotgun, and he knew that if he tried to make a fight of it, the revolver bullet would reach him before he could bring his more unwieldy piece to the shoulder and aim. Besides, they were two to one.

The revolver glittered grimly in the German's hand.

Then a sudden thought flashed into the boy's mind.

Moving to one side, as though giving the im-

pression that he felt it vain to resist, David turned his back to the two intruders, and throwing his repeating shotgun to his shoulder, fired in the air three times in succession.

Throughout all the world, three is the signal of danger, and even on the desert, three shots is a call for assistance.

The shots startled the Germans, for they saw at once their danger, but having been ordered by their chief to enter the mosque and to commit certain acts which would be sacrilege, they pushed by the boy and entered.

No sooner were they inside, than David sprang to the heavy metal-barred door and swung it shut, wedging it in place with the stock of his gun, there being neither wood nor stone at hand.

As the door slammed, there came a revolver shot from the inside. The bullet struck against one of the cross-bars and dropped harmlessly.

In the distance, some Arabs, riding in the direction of their black tents, had heard the shots. Turning in their saddles, they saw smoke rising from near the mosque door and beheld a figure in European clothes. With a common impulse they shook the reins of their horses and, with spears at the advance, came charging up the slope.

Their fierce eyes gleamed angrily on David, till he explained the situation and pointed to the closed door.

"I have been taught by my father," he said, "that a mosque is a holy place, and that it is not pleasing to Allah that one who is not a true Moslem should enter."

To which the elder Arab replied:

"Thy father, the Man of Peace—to whom be honor—is blessed in a son who remembers the words of wisdom. Abd-el-Imhammad has said it."

David knew that this was equal to a formal declaration of protection, alliance and friendship, and he would willingly have stayed longer to talk with his new friends, but Abd-el-Imhammad, the leader of the party, said emphatically and significantly:

"As Allah wills it, let me no longer prevent you from continuing your way."

This was a blunt dismissal and David, lifting his shotgun from the socket of the mosque gate, trod homewards.

A fusillade of shots told the boy that the Germans were making some defense, but David did not need to look. Had a whole German regiment been present it could not have saved the lives of

men who had deliberately entered a mosque to desecrate it.

Stopping at the little mound where he had first descried the Germans in the distance, David dug up the small tablet of cuneiform inscriptions and set out for home.

Surely to-day was the day of mirage! No sooner did the site of the encampment loom before him than David rubbed his eyes, fearing that his sight was deceiving him in the dusk. There was the little hut where he and his father rested in the heat of the day, for it was much too far to return for the siesta to the main encampment on the banks of the Euphrates; there was the shelter of the mud-covered reeds that had been erected to protect from the sun the picture-covered stone slabs that had been excavated from the ruins of the ancient palaces of Babylon.

But—where were the tents of the laborers?

His heart beating fast with the presage of danger, David hurried forward.

The huts were empty; the tents gone.

The encampment of Arabs had vanished like mist before the sun.

The mounds and dust-heaps of Babylon, never

to the boy's eyes as desolate as now, loomed between him and the setting sun.

A jackal howled over the waste and a hyena gave vent to his mocking laughter.

Bewildered, even confounded, David searched the hut in vain for some token or sign left by his father. There was none. Passing into the mud-covered reed shelter where the slabs had been stored, he saw, in the faint light, some dark scratches above one of the cuneiform inscriptions. Bending down, he deciphered, written in lead-pencil, the following message:

"Your horse is tied by the Mound of Bel. No Arab will venture there before daylight. Lose no time. Go to Basra at once and find Ferguson. Your game-bag will provide you with all you need for the journey. The Sheik has lent me a racing camel and the Turkish cavalry are already on their way here from Bagdad. Good-luck, my boy. Good-by. It won't be for long! Your Father."

David was alone amid the ruins of Babylon, with the fires of war beginning to rage around him.

CHAPTER III

A CAMEL-FLIGHT FOR LIFE

Much had happened that afternoon while David was still striding over the marshes shooting black partridge, events not less drastic than the boy's prevention of the German attempt to cause a massacre of the Americans by violation of the sanctity of the mosque.

It must have been just about the same time that David first turned his steps in the direction of the mosque that Ibrahim came up to the hut where the archæologist was sitting idly, awaiting the development of events.

After the usual ceremonious greetings had been exchanged, for, no matter how hurried an Arab may be, he will never fail to make the customary salutations, Ibrahim said:

"It is written, O Man of Peace, that 'he who set the foot of a friend on the right way has pleased Allah.' "

"It is so written," the archæologist agreed, concealing his impatience.

"The Sheik Abd-el-Rahman, a true follower of the Prophet—on whom be peace—has sent his two swiftest racing camels. He places them at your service and assures you that the Suni dogs have no horses that can catch them over the desert sands."

The American looked the Arab squarely in the eye.

"You believe it is necessary that I should escape?"

The Bedouin waved his hand.

"The pastures are no longer green," he answered, using the general expression of the Arab when explaining a move of the encampment.

It was true. On every side the archæologist saw the black tents being taken down, rolled into bundles and put on the backs of the baggage camels. Nearer at hand, from his own camp, the bearers were going. The laborers' camp was already half abandoned.

" 'Time is from Allah, but hurry is the child of the Evil One,' " the archæologist remarked.

"The road is short to the eager pilgrim," retorted Ibrahim, referring to the pilgrimage to Mecca.

From the point of view of Oriental speech, this

was definite. The archæologist stood up and put a direct question.

"There has come word of trouble?"

The Arab's answer was swift and clean-cut.

"A troop of horsemen has already left Bagdad, with orders for the arrest of all the Franji."

"But I have a firman," (authority from the Sultan), declared the American.

"War changes all," said the Bedouin.

The archæologist sat still. The frantic cries of the Arabs and Nestorians as they struggled, each in their own groups, to get their belongings together and flee from the place, disturbed the desert silence.

"I will go to-morrow," he said at last.

" 'Delay not the doing of a good action, evil may wait,' " quoted the Arab.

"How soon, then?"

"There is a boy holding the bridles of the camels."

"One moment, then," and the old scholar slipped into the shelter to pencil the brief note of direction to David, rightly fearing that if he left a letter, it might be removed.

Five minutes' further preparation sufficed, and then the archæologist, with his papers stuffed into

a small flat satchel which he slung over his back, followed the Bedouin to where two white racing camels were standing:

"What noble animals!" he exclaimed.

"They are of the purest blood," replied Ibrahim, turning to watch one of his tribesmen who was galloping towards them at topmost speed.

"The horsemen are in Hillah!" said the newcomer, as he approached.

Hillah, the little village built largely out of the fragments of Babylon, was but a few miles away.

It needed no urging for the archæologist to swing himself into the camel-saddle, and the beast rose from his knees with the gurgling bubble cry so strong and harsh in the racing breed.

"May the path be short!" said the Arab who had brought the news.

"In-sha-Allah,—as Allah wills!" answered the archæologist, and the soft-footed camels broke into the racing trot. Babylon was soon left behind.

Came night, the stars, the silence of the desert, and the two camels speeding with their noiseless stride.

In the distance, a prowling jackal.

Over the rim of the horizon, invisible to the

pursued, rode the pursuers, Turks and Arabs of the tribe of Muntafik, Sunis all, loyal to the Sultan of Turkey.

The archæologist, unused to the racking, joint-wrenching motion of a racing camel, which moves the fore and hind legs together first of one side and then of the other, like the gait of a rocking-horse, suffered intolerable pain all night through. Not until nearly morning did he allow an impatient exclamation to escape him.

"Allah may have created the camel because of his love for his people that dwell on the desert," he said, "but to ride him for many hours turns the heart to water."

But Ibrahim, on the other camel, hastening forwards, only replied.

"When a fire is to be extinguished one does not ask whether the water thrown on it be salt or fresh."

Twelve hours of riding had brought the old scholar almost to the point of exhaustion, but Ibraham had no intention of being overtaken in the act of helping an infidel to escape from the edict of the Commander of the Faithful.

After a very brief halt, and a meal consisting of a handful of meal, a few dates and a drink of

INDIAN CAVALRY TO THE RESCUE.
Advance of the lancers on Kut-el-Amara in the hope of saving the beleaguered British.

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IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS ON THE MOVE.
Note differences in saddles used by officers and privates. Camel-riding is fatiguing in the extreme.

water, the Bedouin led the way across the desert at a steady pace.

Towards evening the fugitives drew near to Haman, a small village on the main caravan route for the Mecca pilgrims from Persia.

"Will it not be dangerous to stop here?" asked the archæologist.

"It is a danger we must face," the Arab answered. "We shall not reach the khan (walled camping-ground) until nearly dark, and, as you know, at dark the gates are closed. Even if those who are pursuing are close behind, they cannot reach here before the gates are shut."

"But might they not camp outside and cut us off in the morning?"

"If they are Turks," the Arab answered, "they will not wish to sleep in the open; if they are Bedouins, unless a very strong party they would not risk a ghazu."

Lower and lower sank the sun; the fierce heat which had been parching the lips and searing the eyes began to die down. With evening all things seemed to grow more aloof from the American. The desert stretched out interminably and the mind seemed to grope in vain for something human, something less pitiless. The ruins of Baby-

lon had been desolate with the melancholy reminders of what had once been, but, in Babylon, there was something definite upon which the mind could fasten. The desert is desolate with a crushing emptiness, sand and sun and sky seem to mock at human effort.

Although he had lived for years in the East, this was the first time that the archæologist had been on the desert alone, with a solitary Arab. Better than ever before he understood the thought of the East.

Resist the silence of the desert, and it is terrifying with the inert weight of its monotony and impalpable horizons; yield to the desert, and some inner well of silence in man responds to that vast hush. One becomes a part of the great silence. Horizons and time matter no longer, speech is unimportant. The air vibrates with unsaid words, with unthought thoughts. And the archæologist understood how the fatalistic doctrines of Islam were born of the desert and flourish there. There is no measure of space in the desert save the length of a caravan march from rise to set of sun, there is no measure of time but the passage of the sun across the sky.

To the western mind, Nature is something that

may be tamed. Rocks may be blasted away to build great roads, bridges may be flung across rivers and chasms, forests may be turned into gardens, prairies into cultivated fields, even waterfalls harnessed to drive the wheels of industry. But, to the eastern mind, Nature is no ready slave. Sand and sun and sky are all-powerful. They may not be conquered or controlled, and the Bedouin lives on the fringes of the desert in full understanding that it is only in so far as he yields to Nature that he will be permitted to live, by grace of that savage trio, the sand, the sun, and the sky.

At last came the khan. Though one of the pilgrimage stations, Haman is also a point where the commercial caravans stop, and the khan was full. It was one of such stopping-places of the simplest variety, merely a high wall with a number of covered arches, two stories high, on one side of the great open court yard, or corral. Bells from the animals tinkled on all sides. Everywhere were kneeling camels, waiting patiently for their loads to be removed; mules munched the straw out of each other's bursting saddles; yellow dogs slouched about. Two muleteers were quarreling violently. An Armenian merchant was speaking to a caravan leader with the obsequious,

cringing manner of the Armenian trader in the East. The Arabs remained aloof.

And the sun came to the rim of the horizon, shooting out the warning of his departure in flames of orange and gold.

The confusion of the khan ceased. The quarrels came to an end. Even the animals sensed the moment of repose, as Ibrahim and nearly all the others present threw their praying-carpets on the bare ground, placed their hands on their knees and chanted:

"Allah is great!"

They bowed the head.

"I give praise to Allah!"

And fell upon their knees.

"Allah Akhbar!" (Allah is great.)

And bowed forward until their foreheads touched the earth.

"Subhana 'llah!" (I give praise to Allah) they then repeated three times, as they sank back on their heels, followed by another prostration and a repetition of the same words.[1]

And, at the moment of sunrise and sunset, and at other times, all over the world, Mohammedans

[1] The full evening prayer is much longer and in parts is poetic and beautiful.

never forget the morning and evening cry to Allah.

The crimson and golden tints died out. The clear sharp starlight of the desert filled the sky.

At once the tumult and confusion of the khan were resumed. Small fires of dried camel-dung smoked here and there for the simple cooking of lumps of mutton in melted butter. In the center of the court yard, a larger general fire was lighted of brushwood and dry grass-roots, and on this was a common pot out of which many took the pieces of meat with their fingers. Those who had dined took turns at the bubbling nargile or water-pipe. In the corner several men drew water from a deep well with a squeaky wheel, and chanted in chorus as they pulled. The savage bubble-scream of an angry camel rose above the babel of the braying of donkeys and the neighing of horses.

Then the swift dark of the desert rushed over, as though Night had no time to wait for the departure of evening. The animals fell silent, save for the occasional tinkle of a bell as one or another moved. The voices of the men died out. In the distance a jackal cried. The khan went to sleep.

The desert does not sleep. The stars march over it during the night as the sun did in the day, and the sand, the stars and the sky keep up their perpetual watch and their perpetual hush.

There was not much sleep for the archæologist that night, for it was impossible to say whether the pursuing party might not have received orders to follow night and day, in which case, by commandeering horses at certain posting-stations, they could soon overtake the camels. The night passed quietly, however, and an early start was made, the American and Ibrahim leaving the khan at the first rays of sunrise. Indeed they were well on their way before the sun appeared above the horizon. At once rose the cry from Ibrahim, as he stroked his beard like every devout Moslem believer:

"I witness that there is no God but God and that Mohammed is his prophet!"

In spite of the haste of the journey, Ibrahim stopped the camel, set his praying-carpet on the ground and commenced his morning orisons, facing Mecca. In a measure, he was not afraid of his pursuers overtaking him during this exercise, for it was absolutely certain that they, wherever they were, were repeating the same long

ritual, with exactly the same gestures and in exactly the same words.

No matter where he happens to be or what he may be doing, the Mohammedan never forgets to pray when the hour of devotion has arrived. The laborer in the fields will let fall his tools, the merchant bargaining in the bazaar will set down the cloth he is seeking to sell, donkey-drivers will drop down by the roadside, courts of law will suspend business, even on a traveling railway-train many will carry out the worship.

When two hours' travel away from the khan Ibrahim stopped suddenly.

"O Man of Peace," he said, "from here you must go alone. The camels will not aid you, and I cannot. See, here is a pilgrim's dress. Put it on. You must lie by the roadside as though hurt or ill, and when the caravan we left behind at the khan overtakes you, appeal for help. Say that you were with the former caravan which passed here yesterday, but fell ill and were left behind. You are old. You speak Arabic well. You understand Islam."

The archæologist looked at Ibrahim in astonishment. He could not understand this sudden desertion.

"And you?" he asked.

The Bedouin looked out over the desert.

"I go on with the two camels," he said. "It is sure that those who follow will have trackers, who can tell the print of one camel's foot from among a thousand, and as long as the tracks continue across the desert, they are not likely to suspect that one of the camels is riderless."

"You mean to draw the whole pursuit after yourself?"

"Even as you say."

"But if they catch you?"

"That is as Allah wills," the Bedouin replied.

The camels knelt down and the old archæologist put on the pilgrim dress.

"Be bold," said Ibrahim. "You have gold. When the caravan comes, beg for help and offer to buy a mule. Some one will arrange for you, by shifting the pack from one of the baggage-animals. This is important, for you do not walk like an Arab. Those who follow are not likely to look closely at the band of pilgrims if the eyes of the trackers can follow the tracks of the two racing camels continuing in front of them."

"And if the caravan people are suspicious and

turn me over to the soldiers or Arabs, or whatever they are?" queried the archæologist.

"All paths are drawn by Allah," the Arab answered, "but the pilgrims will be even more afraid of the soldiers than you. Allah with you!"

"The peace of Allah with you a thousand times," returned the archæologist, after a few sentences of gratitude, at the same time giving Ibrahim, as a parting gift, an old Egyptian talisman ring, adding, "it is true what they say of the Sons of the Desert: 'the honor and the horse of a Bedouin can never be outstripped.' When this war is over I shall come to see you again."

"As Allah wills," the Bedouin replied.

He mounted the saddle of the foremost camel and set off along the desert track. In a few minutes the shapes were merging against the horizon.

The archæologist dropped upon the ground beside the way, ready to simulate weakness when the caravan of pilgrims should pass by.

Within an hour the head of the pilgrim caravan had approached. Some of the pilgrims were trudging on foot, but others were on mules. One, evidently a Pasha, rode a splendid horse and was

followed by several servants. There were several women in the caravan, seated in covered wicker cradles suspended on either side of mules.

"In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful and the Compassionate!" cried the archæologist, as the Pasha's train came near.

The Pasha reined up his horse, and the American, feigning great weakness, staggered toward him, and told the tale which had been agreed upon with Ibrahim, adding, to give color to the story, that he had been a dealer in antiques and had lived in many countries, but that now he was old he was determined to make the pilgrimage to Mecca before his death, but that his strength was failing.

The Pasha listened, then motioned to one of his servants.

"Give him your mule," he said; "it is written that 'the strong man shall make place for the weak, the well for the weary.'"

The American was profuse in thanks and offered to pay the Pasha.

"'To a pilgrim, prayer is of more value than gold,' the Pasha answered. "You may recompense the servant who will have to walk. And, as you have been a traveler and lived in strange

DESERT TRAVEL: THE ANCIENT WAY.

DESERT TRAVEL: THE MEDIAEVAL WAY.

Australian Official Photo.

DESERT TRAVEL: THE MODERN WAY.

countries, you will have seen many things unknown to my eyes. Ride beside me for a space, that we may lighten the length of the way. 'Learning is wise,' says the Prophet, 'if it lead not out of the path.' "

The archæologist accepted gratefully, and finding out that the Pasha was from Arabistan, turned the conversation to a praise of the glories of the Persian race, and recounted old legends of the country which the Pasha himself only knew in part. As a result, the leader of the pilgrims was delighted with his new companion.

An hour later, there came dashing up a troop of Turkish horsemen, with a considerable body of Muntafik Arabs. The archæologist's heart began to beat more quickly, for he knew for whom they were seeking.

The officer in charge greeted the Pasha, and after the customary ceremonial salutations, asked,

"Were there two travelers on racing camels in the khan where you rested last night?"

"Yes," the Pasha answered, "I saw them this morning. They left early, before our animals were saddled."

"Then they cannot be far away," declared the officer eagerly.

One of the Pasha's servants, desert-born, spoke, "They are still in sight!" and pointed with his finger.

The Arabs, who were with the Turkish soldiers, caught sight of the two specks on the horizon, and with wild cries urged their horses on. The Turks caught the infection and followed. No one for a moment thought of questioning the pilgrim who rode on the right hand of the Pasha.

The day passed, the archæologist hard put to it several times to keep from betraying his ignorance of many of the simpler matters of the pilgrimage which any true Mohammedan would have known. As the Pasha did not seem to be of a suspicious character, however, the make-believe pilgrim was able to explain these lapses by his statement that he had lived many years in the cities of the infidels, carrying on his trade in antiques and gems.

In the middle of the afternoon, a cloud of dust on the horizon gave rise to active fears on the part of the pilgrims. The dangers of an Arab raid were always present, and though the pilgrims had little reason to fear for their lives—for no Bedouin would slay a true believer on his way to Mecca—still, several of the travelers, and espe-

cially the Pasha, were traveling comfortably and had personal belongings of value which might be seized.

As the cloud of dust grew nearer, however, it became evident that it was created by the Arab and Turkish horsemen who had passed them that morning in pursuit of the two racing camels.

"If their mission was just, may Allah have granted them success," exclaimed the archæologist to the Pasha.

The Persian, a true Shiah, answered bitterly,

"Allah knows best why he allows the Turk to prosper."

There is no love lost between the Persians and the Turks. There is less between the Turks and the Arabs.

As the party approached, the archæologist asked himself how that extraordinary Oriental empire, the Turkish empire, can have endured so many years, when greater and better empires have vanished into dust. For, of all the empires that the world has known, not only is the Ottoman empire one of the weakest, but it is also one of the most scattered.

Only a very small proportion of the Turkish empire is populated by Turks. In Europe, a

large part of the population is Bulgarian, Albanian, and Greek; in Asia Minor, Kurd, Laz, Circassian, Georgian, and Anatolian, to say nothing of lesser tribes; Syria possesses another hotchpotch of races and all the deserts from the foothills of Asia Minor clear to the south of Arabia are inhabited by Arabs.

Through most of this country, the Turkish authority exists only in name. Heavy taxes are levied, but are not always collected; large sections of the country can only be kept from revolt by periodic indiscriminate massacres; tribute is often nothing more or less than plunder secured by a Turkish military force; and the Turkish writ does not run in Arabia. Nothing holds or has held the Turkish empire together save the religious belief that the Sultan is the mouthpiece of Islam when the dignitaries of the church are in agreement with him.

By now, the party was near enough for the archæologist to examine the riders carefully and he could tell by their aspect that Ibrahim had not been taken.

The Pasha reined up courteously.

"May the Curse of Eblis rest on them!" replied the Turkish officer. "Half a day's march

from here, there is a wide stretch of soft and shifting sand, poor footing even for camels but impossible for horses. My Arabs tell me that this belt of fine sand runs for two days' marches to the south, and that before I could return to Hillah and secure camels, the two men I am seeking would be so far ahead that we could not overtake them before they reached the harder sand beyond. Truly, O Pasha, the deserts are only fit for the children of Jân."

"Was their crime so great?" asked the Pasha.

The archæologist leaned forward interestedly. He would learn, at least, for what official reason the Turkish government was seeking his head.

"Well," he said apologetically, "it is a Jehad."

The Arabistan Pasha made a slight deprecatory gesture with his hand.

"I have heard of it," he said, "but do not rightly understand. The Sultan is the servant of the Prophet, and cannot be at the same time the servant of the infidel Kaiser. Is it the servant of the Prophet who has called for war or the servant of the Kaiser?"

"It is the true believer against the Franji," retorted the Turkish officer.

The Persian spat on the ground in approved

fashion to show his hatred of the infidel, but he replied none the less honestly.

"The friend of Allah is he who fulfills the words of Allah, and not he who says of himself, 'I am of Allah.' The Franji—on whom be the curse of Eblis—are careful of sacred places and the true believers live in peace under their rule. I have been in Beluchistan and India, and I know."

"The sword of the believer is not stained when it takes the blood of an infidel," the Turk rejoined. "It came to the ears of the Bey that a Franji was digging in the ghost-haunted walls of the cities of the giants, unearthing ancient curses against the children of Allah."

The Pasha turned to the archæologist by his side.

"You, O Merchant," he said, "have known much of such ancient things. Could there be found such curses?"

The old scholar's heart leapt into his throat. Here he was set face to face with the man who was seeking him. He realized at once that to give an answer seeming to excuse the Franji would be the likeliest thing to arouse suspicion, so answered promptly:

"Truly, there are such curses. Once, in Aleppo, there was brought to me a talisman with a curse engraved thereon. I am but a merchant and do not know much about such things, so referred the matter to the Cadi. He gave judgment in my favor, but kept the gem."

This was so thoroughly in the character of a possible happening, and so fully the possible experience of a merchant that it drew no suspicion. Salutations were exchanged and the Turkish soldiery returned, empty-handed. For the moment, the archæologist was safe, though it had been a narrow escape.

Moreover, he had learned one of the most important points in the threat of war which was now blazing into the Eastern world, and that was that the Mohammedan peoples—who, far from being fools are usually very keen observers of political affairs—had immediately grasped the fact that no edict issued by a Sultan at the behest of an infidel Kaiser could cause a Holy War.

A few days later, ambling slowly on the pilgrims' way, the archæologist was startled nearly out of his wits when the Pasha remarked to him, in a quiet, conversational tone,

"O Merchant, I would give you some advice.

Your disguise is good, but it will not serve you in Mecca."

The old scholar, for the moment, could do nothing but gasp.

The Pasha smiled at him kindly.

"When the Turkish captain told of the Franji who had been digging for sorceries in the ancient cities, and who had escaped the day before, I knew well that it must be you. Arab merchants are ignorant; they disdain to learn anything save to haggle over prices. An Armenian merchant would pretend knowledge. A Jewish merchant would know all that was to be known. You are neither Arab, Armenian, nor Jew. You appear suddenly on the roadside the very morning that they are searching for a Franji who knows just those things you know. Truly, O Merchant, one does not have to possess great wisdom to guess who you may be."

The archæologist saw that he would lose the favor of the Pasha by any disclaimer.

"Truly, O Pasha," he replied, "the Persians have eyes like a hawk. I am that Franji, but I need not tell you that the tale of sorceries is idle. Such stories are for Turks and children."

Inwardly gratified by this tribute to his people, the Pasha continued,

"That you are escaping is clear, but you have words of wisdom on your lips and it is the act of a fool to silence a wise man. To me, on pilgrimage to Mecca, these Turkish troubles no more ruffle my mind than the clouds on the horizon prevent the setting or rising of the sun. Yet I should like to know what are your plans of escape. I will not help you to Mecca, but I do not think you wish to go."

"Not being a Believer," answered the archæologist, "I should be guilty of sacrilege if I went to the Holy City. It was my plan to branch off, in the night, shortly before reaching the Holy City and join myself to a returning caravan on the way that goes through Akabah. Thus I should get to Egypt, where I should find the English and my friends."

The Pasha bent his brows in thought.

"It will take you weeks, perhaps months," he said, "to make that voyage, and, when you get into the territory of the Shereef of Mecca, if there is even a hint that you are not a true believer, even the Shereef himself could not help you."

"Yet," responded the American, "so far as I can see, it is the only way."

The Pasha rode on thoughtfully.

"When the English came into my district," he said, "they were honest to my people and by the building of a great pipe to carry oil down from the mountains to the sea, they made many of my people prosperous. It is written, 'He who refuses to do a good act when it lies in his path is as he who throws a stone into a well.' "

"You have helped me," replied the archæologist. "I might have been in a Turkish prison now but for your kindly silence."

"You are not safe from a Turkish prison yet," the Pasha continued. "I have been thinking that it would be wiser if you were to try to reach Jerusalem, instead of Akabah. The Sinaitic Desert is difficult to cross. Besides, in Jerusalem, since it is a Holy City not only for the true believer but also for the Christian and the Jew, there will be less suspicion."

"But the desert lies between here and Jerusalem," came the objection.

"There is a way by which it may be crossed at Jauf," the Pasha answered. "I have friends in Damascus. If I should give you letters to Damas-

British Official Photo.

THE PROCLAMATION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, READ AT THE BASE OF THE TOWER OF DAVID, IN JERUSALEM.

"I make it known to you that every sacred building'—shrine or customary place of prayer, of whatsoever form, of the three of the great religions of the world, which have been consecrated by the pilgrimages of devout people for many centuries—will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred."

cus, as though touching on important matters of business which need to be attended to in my absence, there would be a reason for your crossing along the edge of the Jebel Shammar range of hills, where there are a few wells and enough scanty herbage for a single horse to crop. Once arrived on that route you are near the Hedjaz railroad, and could take the train as far as Damascus."

The sunken eyes of the archæologist glowed at this program.

"O Pasha," he said, "the plan is one which might be expected from one of your learning and wisdom. Since you know so much of my difficulties, let me tell you all," and he proceeded to tell the Pasha concerning David, left to his own resources amid the ruins of Babylon.

"I have one son myself," declared the Pasha when the American had finished, "still very young. By the Beard of the Prophet, I will help you to the marrow of my bones!"

The rest of the afternoon was spent in discussing plans, for the next day the caravan would be nearing Kauf, where the archæologist would have to take the desert all by himself, although not knowing either the exact location of the wells or

where to seek forage grounds. Not being a regular caravan route, there would be no khans along the way.

Next morning, soon after the caravan started, the archæologist bade good-by to the Pasha and started out for Kauf. There was a faint track in the sand and the American rode steadily. The sand of the desert was hard, and the marks of the spongy feet of camels had rested clearly, though the marks looked as though weeks had passed since any passed that way. That night he camped under the stars, and reached Kauf in safety on noon of the next day.

Armed with the Pasha's letters, the archæologist asked boldly for a crossing to the pilgrim route to Damascus, but received little response to his inquiries. The little settlement was frankly hostile to strangers and the archæologist stayed awake all night, his hand upon his revolver.

He started westward with the break of dawn, only the vaguest directions in his mind. He had been in the saddle but two or three hours when he saw three Arabs come spurring towards him, uttering fierce yells, their spear-points threatening him.

They wasted no time in words.

"Dismount!" ordered the former.

The archæologist put his hand on his revolver and then hesitated. He was an old man, though lean and vigorous still, and he had always been of a peaceful character. He had never shot a man in his life, although on more than one occasion he had been in difficulties with Arab raiders. He could not be sure that he was good enough shot and the odds of three against one were too heavy except for an adept gun-fighter, which the old scholar was not.

He reined up.

"I am on my way to Damascus," he began, but the leader of the three interrupted him.

"Dismount," he said. "No servant of a Persian dog shall ride a horse when there is room for more horses in the bands of a Sheik."

The leader made a sign to one of his followers, who shortened hold on his spear and rode in closer.

This was more threatening than any speech and the old scholar dismounted hastily. One of the horsemen dismounted also and quickly searched his girdle and saddle-bags. Every piece of money he possessed was taken, all his changes of clothing. On the other hand, the papers in the little satchel

were thrown down on the sand at his feet, his already partly emptied water-bottle was refilled and set beside him. All the food in his saddle-bags was returned.

"Allah grant you a good journey," said they, and rode away.

This was not sarcasm, nor, in truth, were the Arabs planning any definite harm. If the stranger died,—well, after all, that was his affair, a chance he took in coming into their country.

The old scholar, though the sun was beating down on his head, though he knew he had at least a hundred and twenty miles to walk before he found an oasis, set his feet firmly to the west and commenced his tramp across the desert. Fortunately, he had passed the sand and come to rocky ground, hard and firm for walking. And, as he strode along, the old archæologist thought within himself as to the curious point of view of the desert Arabs, who will share their last crumb and their last drop of water with a stranger if he comes to their tent and asks their hospitality, but who will, at the same time, rob him of everything he possesses should they chance themselves to be the aggressors.

He remembered how, many years ago, a Sheik had explained this to him.

"We, the Sons of the Desert," he said, "have never been conquered. Not until the desert has been conquered shall we be conquered. When the Turkish soldiers come to the town and force their will, we go to the deserts, where they dare not follow us. Some times they can find the encampment of a Sheik but it is seldom that they can force us to pay tribute and they do not dare to take our flocks.

"Yet, we do not forget that it is they who are the intruders. The Prophet gave the desert to the Sons of the Desert. If, because of the Turks, we can no longer levy honest and regular tribute from all the caravans which pass, then we must levy the tribute as we can. When we plunder a caravan, we are only collecting the taxes which should be ours, but for the usurpation of Turkey."

The archæologist remembered that, at the time, he had thought there was a great deal of justice in the Arab Sheik's position. He felt it less clearly now.

As noon drew near, he found himself near some of the overhanging rock edges of that plateau edge

which is known as the Jebel Shammar and lay down to sleep. He knew that his body would support the strain better if he walked as much as he could by night, and rested by day.

All that night he traveled and when morning came found on the sand the marks of gazelle tracks. At the risk of going a long way out of his way, he followed the tracks and after a couple of hours' walking, found a little marshy pool in the bed of an otherwise dry wady.

Promptly stripping, the old scholar lay for some minutes in the undrinkable water, so that his body might suck up as much moisture as possible. Then he went to sleep. Waking, early in the afternoon he gathered some grass roots and made a fire. In the tin dispatch-case he wore at his waist containing his papers, he boiled the water, repeating this until he had filled his water-skin with the boiled water. It was foul, and the taste was far from pleasant, but the American knew well that by boiling it he had done much to stand off the many fevers and diseases to which the native-born Son of the Desert is slightly more immune.

He walked, gallant old American, all that night again, covering another twenty-five or thirty

miles of the desert. There was no shade this time, and only enough dates and grain for that day's food. An oasis with waving palm-trees and shining lake mocked him in the distance. He set his teeth and walked away from it. Many men have died on the desert, chasing the mirage.

It was a dreary land of death, and the archæologist found himself wishing even for the face of an enemy amid such utter solitude. The only living creature to be seen was the little dried-up lizard of the plain that looked as if he never had a drop of moisture in his ugly body, and the jerboa or jumping rat, one of the few creatures of the world that can live without water. One stretch of black pebbles with a little sand between, gave place to another similar patch. The hours passed like an ugly dream. Only one herb brushed his weary feet from time to time, the bitter and poisonous colocynth.

Next night he wandered on. There was no water in the skin. The stars did not seem to keep their places, but wandered over the heavens. The archæologist realized that he was half-delirious from exhaustion and thirst, but, none the less, he kept the North Star on his right hand nearly all the time, and staggered on.

When dawn came there was no water in sight, but there were here and there some scanty tussocks of grass. That meant, and the old scholar knew it well, that moisture could not be very far below the ground. He searched for a dip in the land and commenced to scoop out the sand with his hands. It fell in again, almost as fast as he could throw it out, but after an hour's work, he reached a cooler, moister sand. Actual water there was not, but there was coolness at the least. Scooping down as far as he could, he filled the tin in which he had kept his papers with the moist sand, and then, by pressing it hard, forced up a teaspoonful of liquid.

There was no food that day. The scorpions "tick-ticked" around him as he slept, his head protected by some tussocks of grass which he had piled up into a sort of bower eighteen inches high, just deep enough for his head to rest without broiling out his brains. Should a simoom or desert sand-storm rise, he knew his bones would whiten on the black-pebbled sands.

That next night he heard the howling of jackals. In some way, he never knew quite how, he reached the place where they were feasting. He joined their horrid feast—there is no need to specify

what it was—snapping beast-like at the prey together with the jackals, the hyenas, the vultures, and other eaters of carrion. It was revolting, nauseating, but it gave him strength to go on. Three nights and part of three days, he had staggered forward, knowing nothing save that he was driving in a westerly direction. On the fourth morning he saw in the distance the black tents of an Arab encampment. They were not more than three or four miles away, but the sun was high before he had crawled on hands and knees near enough to attract attention. Then some of the Arabs saw the moving figure and rode out to investigate.

There was then no hesitation. The American, almost at the point of death, was taken into the Sheik's tent, and tended as though he had been one of the tribesmen. Two days passed before he was sufficiently recovered to speak. Then he told his story, the Arabs crowding into the Sheik's tent to hear the tale.

When he had finished there was a long silence. At last the Sheik spoke.

"It is the Holy War," he said, "and, Franji, we are at war with your people. After two suns have risen we go down to take the Suez Canal away

from the Franji and to place all the lands of the Prophet under the Prophet's rule again.

"But it is written that 'no man treads upon the path save the one that Allah has made for him to tread,' and since he led you to our tents, it must be the will of Allah that we should help you to your own people. It is no work for a warrior to fight those who are not warriors, and, by your tale, you are a man of peace. You shall ride south with us, and when we come close to the Franji lines you shall go. You will not betray our secrets, since we admit you to companionship and honor."

Which oath the old scholar gladly took.

And so it came about that when a skirmish advance was made towards the Suez Canal, a short distance from El-Kantara, the British in the trenches were surprised to see a solitary figure advance from the enemy's lines, carrying a white flag, and walk to the edge of the canal.

Honoring the flag of truce, but wondering greatly, the British sent a boat across to the gaunt figure, standing alone on the banks of that great waterway which joins the West to the East. The old archæologist was conducted at once to the Commanding Officer, to whom he told his story.

From "Sphere": U. S. Copyright, N. Y. Herald Co.

FOUR HUNDRED MILES OF DESERT SENTINELS.

The line of British power across the neck of Asia Minor from the Mediterranean, through Damascus and Bagdad, to the Persian Gulf.

"And now, what can I do for you, Professor Surch?" the officer asked.

"Give me something to do," was the reply. "Interpreter, perhaps, or in the medical department. I am an M.D., though I haven't practiced for years, but I know Turkish, Arabic and a dozen dialects."

"But," said the colonel, "after all your experiences, why don't you go home to America, and take things easy until the war is over?"

"I left my boy David alone, on the ruins of Babylon," the sturdy old scholar answered, "with battle flaming on the horizon and hostile tribes around him. I'm going back across the desert to get David, sir. It's the West against the East and I know the West will win. Somewhere I can be of use. A man's never too old to help, and I mean to find my boy."

CHAPTER IV

CAUGHT IN A TURKISH TRAP

STUNNED by his discovery of the pencil marks on the slab which, in cuneiform character, recorded the victory of a Babylonian King, David stared at his father's message. He knew that the urgency must have been extreme for his father thus practically to desert him in a foreign land, and he shrewdly suspected that one of his father's intentions had been to draw the line of pursuit away from him.

This was actually the case, and, as it afterwards turned out, had David been with his father on the flight, the old archæologist could never have simulated a pilgrim with the Persian caravan, and the Turkish officer would infallibly have detected a boy among the pilgrims.

Of all this, of course, David was unaware. He had nothing to go upon save his father's advice to try to reach Basra, where the merchant Ferguson, also an American, would aid him. True, he

had a horse. Then, as he thought over the phrase in the writing, "your game-bag will provide you with all you need for the journey," David remembered the tablet that he had dug up near the mosque. The old archæologist's meaning was clear. Gems were currency in a land where money was seldom seen.

Having thoroughly memorized his father's message, David picked up handful after handful of dry sand, and scrubbed at the slab until not a sign of the lead-pencil marks was to be seen. It was unlikely that any one would come that way, less likely that any one would notice the marks, and highly improbable that any one who did see them would be able to read English. But it was as well to make sure.

Then slowly and thoughtfully, David went to find his horse tethered by the Mound of Bel. Well he knew that no good Moslem would come near the place before daylight.

Many a time had the boy heard the legend about Maroot and Haroot, who are suspended by the heels, though invisible, above the Mound of Bel, and who must stay there till the Day of Judgment.

Haroot and Maroot, the old tradition tells, were

two angels who were on earth during the time of King Solomon. They grew jealous of his wisdom and of his power, and joined with the children of Jân and the demons in resisting the works of the Wise King. But, so great was the power of Solomon, they could reverse none of his decrees. Only, they spread abroad in the minds of the people a belief that Solomon did all his wonders by means of books of magic and that he commanded the djinns, the genii, the Afrites and other supernatural powers of the world not by means of his wisdom, but by means of the magic signs and symbols found in his cabalistic books.

After the death of Solomon they brought these books forth and many people fell under the power of the demons because they studied magic in the hope of attaining the wisdom of Solomon, not knowing that all wisdom is from Allah alone, and that it is Allah who permits the veil of human folly to be drawn from the eyes of certain whom He wills.

It was for this, the tradition runs, that Nebuchadnezzar took the vessels of gold and all the treasures from the Temple of Jerusalem, for Nebuchadnezzar wished the wisdom of Solomon. (The Mohammedan tradition follows closely the

Bible story of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation in becoming as one of the beasts of the field.)

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, so the legend states, when there was strife among men, the two angels Haroot and Maroot were sent to Babylon to teach justice and equity. They ruled over the hearts of men for some little time until Venus, the most beautiful of all the heathen goddesses, came to plead her cause against her husband before the two angels.

Thereupon, largely because their hearts had been diverted from thoughts of Allah by their study of the books of magic, they were dazzled by the beauty and the charms of Venus. They, forgetting that the true judge is He whose eyes are blind to the person or riches of a suitor in a case, not only yielded to their partiality, but told her of their feelings. Whereupon she vanished and, by the will of Allah, the fallen angels were suspended in the air by their heels until the Judgment Day over the Palace where they had shown themselves willing to give false judgment.

David was not afraid of Haroot and Maroot and went boldly to the mound, where, as he expected, he found his horse tied by the bridle. But, before mounting, he looked around at the

desert to the west, at the mounds of Babylon, at the river Euphrates rolling beside its fringe of palm-trees. Basra was to the south, along the Tigris, five hundred miles away, an easy though long voyage by water, but a journey difficult and wearisome by land. David's instructions had been to get to Basra, but his father had not said whether he should try to ride all the way, though the providing of a horse suggested it. If war were breaking out, it was sure that every inch of the Tigris would be guarded by the Turks. That was the chief danger. Perhaps he ought to try to follow the course of the Euphrates, until it joins the Tigris at Basra.

The Mesopotamian country is strangely situated. It is nothing more or less than a deep marsh valley lying between the high plateau of the Syrian and Arabian deserts to the west and the mountains of Asia Minor and Persia to the north and west. As the mountain slopes are high, with heavy snows in winter, the two rivers of that double valley, the Tigris and the Euphrates, come down in terrible floods in the Spring. As the banks are of a dusty character continually blown over with fine sand from the

desert, they have no permanent channel and are very shallow, so that the flood waters makes millions of acres of marshes during January, February and March, which, during the rest of the year, become plains of a fine, impalpable, choking dust.

At the stretch where the great ruins were built, Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Bagdad, the rivers approach as close to each other as eighteen miles and the whole valley is less than forty miles across. At the widest point, near Amara, the valley reaches two hundred miles across. Much of this, however, is permanent swamp.

It was the fifth of November, 1914. Reports, hardly more than rumors, had reached the expedition camp with regard to the progress of the war. It was known that Germany's first advance had failed, it was known that the Russians had thoroughly demoralized the Austrians. It was known that a Jehad had been proclaimed, but David did not know whether Turkey was actually in the war. As a matter of fact, war had been declared on November 1, Turkey having been compelled to assist Germany, because the Kaiser had aided the Sultan to defy the Powers of Europe when Abdul

Hamid was about to be made to suffer for the unspeakable atrocities committed by the Turks on Armenians and other Christians.

In utter confusion as to the best means of reaching Basra, David bethought himself of his newmade friend, Abd-el-Imhammad, the Arab he had encountered at the mosque. He knew Bedouin life well enough to be sure that if he went boldly to his tent and claimed protection and hospitality, it would be given him without stint. He understood sufficiently the intense fanatic spirit of Mohammedanism to realize that his action in trying to save a mosque from desecration would secure him the fiery friendship of every Moslem who knew of the occurrence.

David decided, as he stood by the Mound of Bel that night, that he would try to reach Basra and find Ferguson as his father had suggested, but first he would try to secure aid, or, at least, information from Abd-el-Imhammad. First, however, he took out the tablet that he had dug up, pried out a couple of the gems and put them in an inner pocket for safe-keeping, then hid the tablet in his game-bag.

It was not too late to reach the tents of his Arab friends that evening, so David, feeling somewhat

lonely and deserted in spite of his father's promise that the separation would not be for long, sturdily mounted his little horse and set out for the encampment.

It was night when he arrived. The spear standing upright at the door of a tent guided David to the tent of the Sheik. At fourteen years of age, a Bedouin is almost grown up, and David knew that he would receive greater respect if he assumed equality.

Like many boys who speak two languages perfectly, David was as courteous and correct in Arabic as he was slangy and neglectful in his own tongue, thus reflecting the customs of each country. So, having dismounted at the opening of the Sheik's tent, he proceeded through the lengthy forms of ceremonial politeness, finally being bidden to sit down on a reed mat, which he knew was for a guest of honor. Arab hospitality would preclude the asking of any questions until the coffee had been drunk.

In the center of the hut glowed a dying fire, and beside it, silently watching the pot on the ashes, sat the coffee-maker. Now and then he scraped the ashes around the pot. A thin veil of smoke rose up slowly and dispersed itself under the low

roof of the tent. The silence was almost religious, the darkness suggested witchcraft rather than night; a hobgoblin might have sprung out of the coffee-maker's pot and not been out of keeping with the scene.

All at once, at the back of the tent, a hand was raised and a bundle of fine dry grass-roots came down on to the fire; in sudden blaze it momentarily lit up the dark faces, flared an instant, flickered, then as rapidly died away. David silently watched the coffee-maker and his host, who being nearest to the fire was dimly visible in its remaining light. The attention of the one was concentrated on his pot, that of the other on the boy.

The coffee-maker reached out his hand without turning and one amongst the crowd at his back—for, as a matter of course, the other members of the tribe had crowded into the Sheik's tent—handed him a massive iron spoon to which was chained a copper ladle.

The Sheik's younger son, obeying a nod from his father, pulled a bag out of a dark recess behind him; another bundle of brushwood was thrown upon the fire and by the light of its sudden, almost startling blaze, the lad untied the bag and

carefully counted out the allotted number of berries. The coffee-maker dropped them into the spoon, for which he had raked out a hole in the ashes.

The slight stir caused by these proceedings subsided, the blaze died away and the attention of all was again riveted on David save that only of the coffee-maker, who sitting close up to the embers, now scraped the white ashes round the pot, now turned the roasting berries over with the ladle chained to the spoon.

The silence was so intense and so prolonged, that the ticking of the lad's watch in his pocket sounded like an intrusive violation of the western world into the comparatively slow movement of life in the East.

Little by little the berries browned until they were almost black, and the coffee-maker emptied them into a copper mortar. As he pounded them, he caused the pestle to ring in tune against the sides of the bowl, a difficult art, for there are many songs of coffee-making in which the words are rarely chanted, but which all those present repeat silently to themselves in rhythm with the ringing of the pestle against the copper bowl.

Yet, though David knew that every Arab pres-

ent was following the unsung words of the song, not a soul moved. Yonder in the night a goat scratched himself against a tent-peg. Darkness outside, darkness inside, save when a spark from the fire suddenly revealed the setting of the eyes that watched, the eyes of sedate, intent Arab faces.

A splutter on the fire as the pot boiled over put an end alike to the tune and to the meditations called up by it. The coffee-maker transferred the ground berries to a copper jug and, pouring the boiling water on them, placed this second pot on the hot ashes. All this had taken fully an hour, but now two tiny cups were produced, and another man moved nearer the fire, to rinse them out, one by one, with hot water, with a care and absorption in the process which David felt to be in strange contrast to the simplicity of the task.

In the three years that he had been away at school, the boy had forgotten to a great extent the Oriental slowness and intensity of mind. Now, as he sat still, controlling himself with not a little difficulty, he felt himself slipping back into the ideas of his childhood, when he had been more Arab than American. Or, as he vaguely expressed it to himself, he was becoming hypnotized

British Official Photo.

SHELLS AND CARTRIDGES IN PLACE OF GEMS AND PERFUMES OF ARABY.
The modern caravan across the Tigris carries a different freight from that of the time of the "Arabian Nights".

by the slow intensity of the actions of the coffee-maker.

The coffee on the fire came to the boil, the coffee-maker poured it back to the original pot, which he again set on the ashes. He then handed the empty jug to the cup-washer, who rinsed each cup out carefully with a few drops of the coffee, left in the pot for that purpose. Very quietly, very precisely, he placed each cup on the ground within easy reach of the coffee-maker, then retired into the background. Not a word had been spoken.

The coffee on the fire boiled up. The coffee-maker reached out his hand. David straightened up in expectation that the long rite was over, but the coffee-maker emptied the boiling liquid back into the original pot and replaced it on the ashes.

The fire now burned very dimly. Even the man's form bending over the glowing ashes was discernible only as a black shadow. The stillness for a few moments was so great and the concentration of all present centered so profoundly on the bubbling coffee-pot, that vague remembrances of the Arabian Nights Entertainments occurred to the boy. He felt as if all the meaning of life, the past, present and future, were being distilled

in the black liquid, and that any moment a genie might arise out of the pot and become visible in the mysterious darkness.

Again the coffee boiled up.

Again the man emptied the boiling liquid into the other pot and replaced it on the fire.

The stillness and the concentration became more intense. Outside, a lamb's sudden cry and the mother's answering bleat rang out sharply on the night, a distant reminder of a far-off world. There were no echoes, and when the sound died away, the tent became the center of that heavy and impelling silence.[1]

The coffee boiled up for the last time.

The coffee-maker—though David could only think of him as some dim sort of a magician—carefully decanted a few drops into each of the two little cups. One was handed to David and one to the Sheik.

"In the name of Allah!" said David, reminiscences of his childhood returning.

A second cup, or rather a few drops in the bottom of the tiny cup, was handed to the boy, and a second time he drank.

[1] "By Desert Ways to Bagdad," by Louisa Jebb (Dana Estes & Co.)

The third time the cup was given its few drops and David, knowing the ceremony, declined the third cup. The drops of thick and bitter liquid were then handed on to the next in importance in the tribe, and so on, until the very last drop had been taken. The mixture was thick and bitter. When the last drop had been drunk, the Sheik turned hospitably to his guest,

"There is no act that man can do, save those which Allah has appointed. Perhaps you may be able to tell us in what way we can help you. I have already heard that you have shown discretion at the mosque, even though not one of the true believers."

Whereupon David, thus encouraged, told the entire story of the day, the warning of Ibrahim, the threat of the dervish, his father's surmises concerning the war, the attempt of the German excavators to embroil the Americans in Arab hatred, and, finally, his return to the site of the expedition camp and his father's advice to try to reach Basra.

When the boy had finished there was a long silence, and then one of the Arabs spoke out of the darkness.

"One of the family of Agaid," he said, refer-

ring to a tribe of Arabs, "told me this morning that there were many Turkish soldiers going from Bagdad to Basra by rafts."

This was disconcerting news.

"Why are they going down to Basra?" asked David, in the hope of finding further information.

The same Arab replied.

"The Turks at Fao have been beaten back by the Franji," came the startling information.

David stared moodily at the dim red spot on the floor which was all that showed of the remains of the fire. He wondered if the Arab's information were correct.

As a matter of fact, it was exact. The War in the East had already begun and the bitter fight for Mesopotamia was just at hand. Though no one knew it, that very place on which the tents were pitched, that very plain between the rivers, was to be drenched again with blood, and, though wars had been fought between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers many a thousand years before, the bitterest and bloodiest war was that which was yet to come.

While waiting for the Sheik or some other of the Arabs to speak, David harked back in his mind for the explanations his father had given him

from time to time as to the causes of the British influence in the Tigris and Euphrates valleys.

Below Basra, as the archæologist had explained, there are two great divisions of the Arab peoples. They are themselves divided into tribes and tribal groups, but are allied in strong confederations. On the Mesopotamian side of the Shatt-el-Arab—which is the name given to the combined Tigris and Euphrates rivers after they join at Qurnah—this confederation is for the purpose of resisting Turkish aggression, and is under the direction of the Sheik of Kuweit. The other confederation is formed for the purpose of resisting Persian aggression and lies on the Arabistan side of the river, under the rule of the Sheik of Muhammerah.

For generations the favorite occupations of the coast Arabs in these regions have been piracy and slave-trading. Now piracy has been a very serious menace to the Sheik of Kuweit, for just off his territories lie the two islands, Bahrein and Mubarak in the Persian Gulf, noted for fine pearls. As the yield of pearls was worth over two million dollars a year, and the Sheik levied a substantial tribute on this, piracy was a sore point with him. He could not arm himself against pirates. Turkey had no navy. It fell to the lot

of England, therefore, to police these waters as she has taken care of nearly all the otherwise unpoliced waters of the earth. It followed, naturally, that the Sheik of Kuweit became a staunch ally of England.

Then David, doing his best to remember things his father had told him, and to which he wished, now, he had paid more attention, tried to recall the relation of the oil question to the Sheik of Muhammerah.

In 1901 an Englishman without much money, but with an unlimited faith in his own powers, secured a concession from the Shah of Persia for working petroleum, in all its forms, in southern Persia. He was successful in interesting British capitalists in his project and he spent large sums in prospecting. Day in, day out, for seven long years, he wandered and journeyed into every hole and corner of southern Persia, his search only made possible by that ready support which English capital gives to the exploration of the ends of the earth. At last he tapped an immense and practically inexhaustible oil-field in Arabistan, within the territories over which the Sheik of Muhammerah exercises control.

In the way of expense, Persia had done nothing,

but, no sooner were the oil-fields found, than both the Shah and the Sheik of Muhammerah found themselves in receipt of a fat sum of royalty annually. In four years, between 1908 and 1912, the oil-fields were developed with a swiftness that seemed like magic, and by 1912 all the necessary refineries were built, a double pipe line 150 miles long was laid down to bring the product down to the coast, and the little desert island of Abadan, in the estuary of the Shatt-el-Arab, developed as though by miracle into an oil-shipping port of good size.

Early in 1914, the British Admiralty, disturbed by the evidences of German aggression in the Orient, bought a controlling interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil company, as many of the newer and heavier battleships of the navy burned oil, rather than coal, and Abadan became an important naval fuel-base. It was small wonder that the Sheik of Muhammerah was also an ally of England.

If he could get into their territories, therefore, David thought, especially if he could make his way down to the teritory of the Sheik of Kuweit, he could thence reach Abadan and be safe. The boy realized that his father did not know, when he advised him to go to Basra, that the Turkish

garrison there was being reënforced by troops from Bagdad. It remained to be seen whether it would be wise for him to try to reach Basra. Abadan or Tao, however, seemed certainly in British hands and the boy knew that once England grips a seaport, she rarely lets go.

But, if he could not go down by river, how should he go?

The dark tent and the silent Arabs were not comforting. David felt as though the darkness were encompassing his future and the silence his fate.

Then the Sheik spoke.

"Last season," he said, "there came to our tents a Franji Pasha who wished to put a halter on the two rivers. He was a powerful Pasha. The Turks had a party of soldiers to do him honor, and his gifts were worthy the acceptance of a Sheik."

By which David judged that an Englishman of some importance had been engaged in diplomatic work along the upper Euphrates.

"In what way would he bridle the river, O Sheik?" asked David.

"As did the ancients," the Arab replied; "when the floods came down he desired to lead

them into great lakes, from which small streams should lead the water to the fields when the summer sun shines hotly."

"Is the Franji Pasha there this season?" asked the boy.

"That we shall soon know," answered the Sheik.

He raised his voice.

"The sons of Harran will ride to-morrow," he said.

This was a characteristic Arab speech. The Sheik of a tribe is only a chief by dignity. Only in tribal wars does the authority of the chief actually become that of a commander, otherwise, it is rather a position of dignity and precedence. Yet the wish of a Sheik is usually regarded and the boy knew that the information would be obtained.

"My father would wish that the Sheik of the tribe of Harran should have a talisman from the cities of the Ancient Past," interjected David after a pause. "It is not well that a Turkish usurper should possess that which has been found in the land of the Arabs."

For a youngster, this was a tactful speech. The Sheik could not, with dignity, accept a gift save from an equal, and a lad of fourteen years,

even though the son of a Franji Pasha, could not be his equal. So, by placing the gift as though it came from his father, David avoided this pitfall. Moreover, a Sheik could not accept "baksheesh" or alms. Nor could he accept pay for hospitality. A talisman, however, was a permissible gift. Furthermore, by declaring it to be something which ought not to fall into the hands of the Turks, he was pleasing the pride of the Arabs.

A slight murmur ran round the silence of the tent. To the Bedouin, a gift to the Sheik of a tribe is a gift to every man in the tribe. David had no need to ask whether the Arabs would go. Such things arrange themselves. Soon after sunrise, he knew, the horsemen would be on their way.

The Sheik replied with a stately expression of thanks and another small bundle of brushwood was thrown on the embers of the fire. The tiny gem was shown and passed around. Then, without a word or sign, the crowd melted away. Another skin was spread on the bags of grain which occupied the rear of the tent, and, without the formality of undressing, in a few minutes the Sheik, his son, and David were fast asleep.

The boy was awakened by the devotions of the

Sheik. As a youngster he had known all the Arabic prayers and wondered whether he ought to recite them now. The little son of the Sheik was also on his praying carpet, following his father, word for word.

David waited until they had finished and then rolled up his bed on the top of the sack-mouths, and turning, repeated quietly some of the opening verses of the Koran.

Answering the expression of surprise in the Sheik's eyes, David explained,

"My father always taught me that there is Truth in all religions, and to do honor to all teachers of all faiths."

The Sheik's eyes lighted.

"'Who teaches a wise thing, sows a good seed,'" he answered.

David spent the morning with the young son of the Sheik, the smaller boy being especially proud of a huge dog which had been given him for a pet when quite a puppy. Like most Arab dogs he was fierce, fully carrying out the words of the old proverb which says, "Better eat clay than risk a battle with the dogs of the Arab!" Yet, since the dog was playful and affectionate, David bent down to pat him on the back.

Ali cried out in dismay.

"'Though the dog's wool is soft, it is unclean!'" he cried, and David, for the first time, understood why it is that while the Arab may treasure his dog, he never touches it, nor does an Arab dog fawn upon his master.

"The only dog," explained Ali, repeating an old Arab tradition, "which will be admitted to Paradise is the dog which watched over the cave of the Seven Sleepers."

This was new to David.

"Tell me, Ali," he said, "what other animals are to be admitted?"

The younger lad was proud of the opportunity of showing off his knowledge to an older one, the son, too, of a Franji Pasha, and he rattled along eagerly.

"Besides the bees," said Ali, "there are ten animals which will be admitted to Paradise. There is the ram which was sacrificed by Abraham, the lamb of Ishmael, the cow which Moses gave to the Israelites, the whale which swallowed Jonah, the ant which Solomon showed as an example of industry, the hoopoe which was in the Temple at Jerusalem, the horse which carried Elijah to heaven and which El Khadr (St.

George) used in his fight with the dragon, the dog which watched at the entrance of the cave of the Seven Sleepers, the ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the day when the people greeted Him with palm branches and the camel which carried Mohammed in the departure from Mecca."

"And no other animal will ever get in?" queried David, who was really interested, and surprised at the knowledge of his young friend.

"No," answered Ali, "not unless Allah sends it to help one of his prophets. What animals are there in the Christian heaven?"

And David, trying to remember, was bound to confess that he did not know.

The morning passed quickly, and shortly after noon the horsemen returned. They reported that the "Franji Pasha who sought to bridle the river" was still there, but was making plans to leave because of the news of the outbreak of war. The Arabs had spoken to him about David, and the English engineer, as the boy recognized him to be from the descriptions, had given them a message that instead of riding south, David should mount horse with the utmost dispatch and ride north to his camp, as he would not leave until the following day.

One of the Arabs offered to accompany the lad, so David hurried to where his horse was picketed and set out with his guide for the upper stretch of the Euphrates, near Hit, where the engineer's camp was located.

They rode steadily to the northward for an hour, and then a cloud of dust on the horizon caused the Arab to rein his horse back suddenly on his haunches. David followed suit.

"When the sun was high in the heavens," the Arab said, "I came down over this way, where we may still see in the sand the tracks of the feet of my horses and the horses of my companions. Who can these be?"

The two riders whirled their horses eastward and rode toward the direction of the river Tigris, but the cloud of dust grew thicker and nearer.

"We seem to be in a trap!" declared David. "Maybe we had better go back to the Sheik."

But the Arab was reluctant to do this. He had been entrusted with the task of guiding the Sheik's guest. Besides, he knew that the Turks were seeking to incense the Muntafik Arabs to a Holy War, and since his own tribe was known to be hostile to the Muntafik, the latter would seize upon the excuse of the presence of a Franji boy

UNDER A SKY LIKE MOLTEN BRASS, AND THE SAND HOT UNDER-FOOT.

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

THE COOLNESS AND SHADE OF AN OASIS MAKE "SHADOW" A WORD OF BLESSING IN THE ORIENT.

who was already a fugitive to wreak their vengeance on the tribe.

So he whirled his horse to the westward and the two rode at topmost speed till they came again to the bank of the Euphrates and then turned northward to see if there would be a space between the cloud of dust and the river.

But, as they rode, there rose upon their ears the long, low hum of a host. Nothing was visible, not even the cloud of dust, for at that time they were riding just in the shelter of the low bank, which, outside the line of date palms, marks the high water of the river in the time of the spring floods.

At a check on the bridle, the Arab's horse came to a sudden halt, and listening intently, the Bedouin said,

"It is the noise of a host."

"Turks?" queried David succinctly.

"How can I tell when I have not seen them?" protested the Arab, "and if I ride to the bank, they may see me and come after me with twenty men."

"Creep up on the ground and see," suggested the boy.

"Allah, the All-wise," replied the Bedouin,

proudly, "gave the Sons of the Desert feet on which to walk and only the lower creatures have bellies on which to crawl."

David's curiosity, however, was greater than any such scruple and, handing the bridle of his horse to the Arab, he crawled along the ground until he came to the edge of the bank. Then, carefully, he put his head above the edge and looked.

This was no band of raiding Arabs, no movement of a Bedouin encampment. The whole plain was studded with groups and companies of men in military formation. In the distance wagons could be seen, and a small black object which sped across the desert to David's right he assumed to be a motor-car. Although too far away to distinguish clearly and lacking a field glass, still David was convinced that he could distinguish cavalry, infantry, and artillery units.

It was the Turkish Army from Bagdad, moving south to reënforce the garrison at Basra.

For a moment David was staggered. As he had feared, they were in a trap. Behind them was the Turkish garrison at Amara, which undoubtedly would have thrown out flanking parties on either side to hold the valley of the Two

Rivers from the Persian mountains to the edge of the desert plateau; on either side of them was a river, the Euphrates to the left and the Tigris to the right; and in front was the Turkish Army. What was the way out?

He crept back down the bank and walked thoughtfully to where the Arab was holding both horses.

"We're in a tight fix," he announced, then, translating the phrase, told his comrade just what he had seen.

The Arab turned his eyes across the river.

"If we were upon the other side," he said, "we might go north without being seen."

"Let us go on the other side, then," suggested David hopefully.

"There is but the bridge of boats below Hillah and the dam at Museyia," the Arab answered, "and it is sure that there will be soldiers at both places."

"We might swim across!" suggested the American boy.

The Arab looked at his companion with surprise.

"Are you one of those to whom Allah has given the fins of a fish?" he said.

"I have no fins, but I can swim," said David.

"I have heard of such things," the Arab replied, not wholly convinced.

"Have you never seen any one swim?" queried the lad, in surprise. Then, remembering, he corrected himself, "No, I don't suppose you would. The Harran are a desert tribe."

He went to the edge of the river and looked across.

"There's quite a bit of a current," he said, aloud to himself, "but if I started out here, even without swimming very hard, the current would take me to the other side a couple of hundred yards down."

"But I have not the fins of a fish," the Arab protested.

"Tell me," returned the lad, "in which direction is the camp? I can swim across. Then you can return to the Sheik and tell him that you have seen me on my way."

The Arab shook his head.

"It is for me to take you to the Franji camp," he said, and David knew that with characteristic Arab persistence, his companion would never turn back until he had either got through or been killed in trying.

"It will eat time to take you over as well," de-

clared the boy. "And we haven't much time to waste, if the camp is still fifteen miles away!"

But the Bedouin remained insistent.

So David stripped and tied his clothes and shotgun on the saddle. Then, leading his horse by the bridle, he started to wade through the river. The Arab horse, unaccustomed to the water and not liking it, jerked back, but, well-trained, on feeling the hand on his bridle and seeing his master before him, advanced gingerly foot by foot until the stream took him off his feet. Then David, who had kept on the upper side of the stream from the horse, struck out boldly. The river was about two hundred yards in width at this point, but the deep water was not more than fifty or sixty yards at most and the boy managed without difficulty, though, as he had expected, the current took him down-stream to the next bend. He tied the horse to a camel-thorn and walked up the river to a point higher than where he had crossed, to allow for the set of the current, then swam back.

By this time David was tired. Although he knew how to swim, he was in no sense a good swimmer. He had learned nothing but the breast stroke and had none of the long, even glide which distinguishes the expert swimmer. When he got

back to the eastern shore of the river, after having crossed it twice, he was blowing like a grampus.

"You have spoken truth," commented the Bedouin, "when you admitted that Allah had not given you the fins of a fish. Yet he hath given you skill to beat the water like the oars of a boat, and I will beat the water likewise, and go over also."

"No," said the boy, "that, O Hassan, you cannot do. Swimming is an art not to be arrived at without some practice. But tie your rifle on the saddle, even as I did, and walk into the water beside your horse, keeping your hand on the saddle. Do not try to hold yourself high out of water, or you will drag the horse down. Let yourself sink as deep as possible, so that only your nose is out of the water. Breathe through your nostrils. So shall you put no weight on the horse, and the slight lift you give on the saddle will keep your head above water. As for advancing through the stream, it is not wide, and the little forward swimming I can do will encourage the horse to do likewise and so we shall get over."

This crossing, however, was much more difficult than the first. As soon as the Arab got beyond

his depth, he grew frightened, and in a half-panic tried to lift himself half out of the water by the saddle. The weight dragged the horse down, and the fright of the rider communicated itself to the horse.

David, puffing hard and unused to the exertion, found that the rhythm of his legs and arms was not uniform. He strove his hardest, but all his efforts were in vain to reach the point where he had landed before, and though he tried until his muscles cracked, the current swept him by. The panic which was in the Arab and in the horse communicated itself to him and he began to thresh out wildly, as he saw the bank receding. He looked down. The next bend was almost a quarter of a mile away.

Could he keep afloat so long?

Black circles danced before his eyes, but he kept his muscles to their task and floundered on.

Then, suddenly, his feet touched ground. The river, always full of shoals and bars, was shallow here. He stood upright to get his breath. The Arab did likewise. A wave of confidence swept back over the boy.

"Come on," he cried, "we're almost there!"

and putting all his force into the task, he towed the horse and rider over the narrow intervening channel to the shoal beyond.

He could afford to scorn the Turkish Army now. The Euphrates was crossed, and he was on the other side.

British Official Photo.

THE BRITISH FLAG OVER THE HOME OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.
Reading of proclamation announcing the occupation of port at the head of the Persian Gulf.

CHAPTER V

THE CHASE ON THE TIGRIS

"So you're Professor Surch's son, eh?" said a tall and rugged man, shaking David's hand heartily. "I'm glad to have the chance of helping you. Didn't have any trouble getting here, did you? You're late."

"Why, yes, sir," the boy answered, "we did have some trouble," and he described his crossing of the Euphrates.

The big Englishman laughed heartily, and turned to the Arab.

"By the graven seal of Solomon!" he said, using a common Arabic adjuration, "but you are worthy of your tribe, O Son of the Sons of Harran, for it takes courage to meet a danger all unknown. You have done a worthier deed in facing an angry river than facing an angry foe."

And David, who had plucked out another of the small gems from the tablet in his game bag, gave it to the Arab, saying,

"Take this gem as a remembrance of how

horse and rider faced the current to guide a friend."

The Arab took the gift and salaamed solemnly.

"By the Verse of the Throne, and the Chapter of Sincerity, and the Two Preventives," he assured them solemnly, "I have done only that which any Son of the Desert will do to one who has come to his tent and eaten bread and salt. Allah forbid that a true Bedouin or the horse of a Bedouin should be slow upon the path of right doing."

David and the English engineer walked with the Arab to where his horse was standing.

"But how will you cross the river again?" asked the boy.

"There are tents of Bedouins not far away," the Arab answered, "and when the sun rises to-morrow—by the light of whom Allah send you prosperity and peace—I will ride back. I can cross the river at Hillah. None will suspect my crossing, for my brethren are near."

And with a salutation of dignified farewell, the Arab disappeared into the gathering dusk of the evening.

After a substantial supper of a European character—for the engineer had many servants and

had evidently been encamped for several months at the place—the conversation naturally turned to the question of the war.

"It's a confounded nuisance," the engineer declared, "because I was just getting my work here nicely started and the Arabs had full confidence in me. Now the Germans are going to spoil it all."

"But I don't see, sir," said the boy, "what this part of the world has got to do with Germany at all? I asked Father about that, but he didn't seem to know, either. Father hated politics, that is unless it was politics a couple of thousand years old."

The Englishman smiled as he leaned back and lit a cigar.

"It's easy enough to see where Germany's interests are involved," he answered. "To begin with, David, Germany was the latest of all empires to be organized. When she defeated France in 1871 and started on a world conquest idea, all the habitable parts of the globe were already colonized. As Germany became richer, she became more populous. Her densely populated sections made Germany greedy for colonies to people; her commercial success made her

greedy for colonies to exploit; and her militaristic system made her greedy for colonies to conquer and to rule. Since all the known lands in the world which were worth colonizing were already colonized, nothing was left for Germany but to develop a larger army than any other power in order to gain territory by conquest. That's clear."

"Why couldn't Germany be content with what she'd got?" queried David.

"Greed," came the answer, "and forty years of success had made her arrogant. She thought she could conquer all the world. Even more than that, she was jealous of England, her commercial rival. England, as a naval empire, depends on the loyalty and unity of her colonies across the seas. India is not only a source of income, but it would be a terrible blow to England's pride if an attack could be made on India. Therefore, for many years, Germany has been trying to undermine England's interests in the East."

"I remember," put in David, "Father told me that was why the Kaiser made an alliance with the Sultan of Turkey, and protected him whenever he undertook the massacres of Christians."

"Exactly," the engineer answered, "but the

Kaiser wanted practical gains at once. In return for this alliance, Germans were granted many commercial concessions in Turkey. One of these was the building of a railway to connect Constantinople with Bagdad. There was already a railway from Berlin to Constantinople, so the new line was known as the Berlin to Bagdad railway."

The engineer paused significantly.

"It is not finished yet!" he added. Then he continued,

"At the same time, as a result of this alliance, military and naval schools with German instructors were established in Constantinople. The Turkish artillery was of German and Austrian manufacture, and the artillery chiefs were German. The equipment of the infantry was German and there were German drillmasters. At the present moment, David, the Turkish Army is as thoroughly a part of the German Army as the Indian Army is of the British.

"Soon after the war began," the engineer went on, "the Turks, acting under instructions from Germany, attacked two Russian ports. The Allies promptly demanded an immediate withdrawal of the ships, an apology, and an indemnity. Turkey evaded the point. The Allies then in-

sisted that all German naval and military instructors in the Turkish service must leave Constantinople. This would leave the Turkish Army leaderless. Turkey could not accept without offending Germany, could not refuse without defying the Allies. It meant war, on one side or the other, and Turkey could do nothing else but declare herself on the side of Germany."

"When did all this happen, sir?" asked David.

"Only a few days ago," the engineer answered, "on November 1st. Now, David, since you are in the middle of this war and not likely to be able to escape from the theater of operations unless the war comes to an end quickly—which seems unlikely now that Germany has been stopped in France, and Austria has been invaded by Russia—I think perhaps I ought to explain to you what Turkey is trying to do.

"The German-Turk plan of campaign, as I see it, is threefold. First of all, there is a strong movement planned against the Russians in the Caucasus, with the intention of securing the Baku oil-fields. Second, there is to be an expedition against Egypt in the hope of capturing the Suez Canal and thus preventing the shipment of troops and supplies from India and Australia to the

western theaters of war. The third campaign, in which we are personally more directly interested, will start south from Bagdad to seize the works and pipe-line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Abadan. That, if successful, would menace the west coast of India and seriously cripple England's naval movements in the East."

"That one has begun already," remarked David; "there must have been just thousands of men in that army we saw this afternoon. But do you think, sir, that Germany can make it go?"

"They have announced a Holy War," the Englishman commented gravely.

"Father didn't seem to think that would amount to much," the boy answered, recalling the archæologist's conversation.

The engineer looked interested.

"I should greatly like to hear what he said, if you can remember," he urged. "Professor Surch has lived a great many years in this country, he is a close student of the Arabs and of Islam and his opinion would be valuable."

So David searched his memory and repeated all that he could remember concerning the difference between the Shiahs and the Sunis, and repeated the professor's disbelief that Mohammedans all

over the world would rise in fanatic revolt on so flimsy a pretext as the instigation of an "infidel" Kaiser.

The engineer nodded his head in satisfaction at this pronouncement.

"That's just about what I think," he agreed, and added, "There appears to me to be always one curious weakness in Germans. The Teutonic mind doesn't seem able to understand any point of view but its own. Germans try to rule, not to lead, and seem to think that they can force other peoples to think as they do. After all, common sense ought to teach them that you can't change the century-old ideas of the East in a year or two.

"True, a Holy War is a very ugly business, and if ever the whole Mohammedan world thought the faith was in danger, no single European nation could put the revolt down. But the Mussulman is not a fool. Far from it! He is a shrewd and careful thinker. If Germany is counting on a Jehad for her success, I agree with Professor Surch that she is going to be badly mistaken, and will find it out mighty soon."

"I had a little experience with Germans, right here in the Garden of Eden," he continued, leaning back in his chair. "You know this place here

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WHERE EVE GAVE ADAM THE APPLE.

British camp kitchen on the legendary site of the Garden of Eden, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

is the original Garden of Eden, don't you?" he queried.

"No, sir," said David, "I didn't. I thought it was farther down the river."

"It is here," the engineer asserted, "or at least, I believe it is.[1] There's not the slightest doubt that the Garden of Eden was at some point along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Every tradition and every piece of evidence shows this. To my mind, it is just as sure that any fertile and luxuriant stretch in this part of the world must have had plenty of water, or, as we engineers would put it, it must have been a free-flow irrigation, as contrasted with irrigation by machinery or human labor.

"When human beings first appeared on the earth, and for a long time afterwards, they must have spent much of their energies in defense against wild animals. To those whose dwelling-places were near forests and jungles the struggle must have been fierce and left time for little else. But in the oases, and fertile strips of country surrounded by deserts, once man began to get the upper hand, he was able to exterminate the

[1] The author here follows the most modern and scientific authority, that of Sir W. Willcocks, for thirty-one years an irrigation engineer in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

dangers from wild beasts, as they could not be recruited from the deserts around.

"Everything, science and tradition alike, says that the early Semites, the ancestors of the Children of Israel, moved down from the northern hills to the Euphrates Valley. Now the first great oasis they met, their first home, was this country here, between Anah and Hit. Even yet, David, in this region, garden succeeds garden, orchards and date-palm groves lie between fields of corn and cotton, for the Euphrates falls over a succession of shallow cataracts, the country sloping downwards. One can see, to-day, a score of places where the water formerly ran along numberless channels and irrigated gardens down stream and out of reach of the floods. Here grew naturally the date-palm and the wild vine, which the Arabs regard as having been the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

"Probably you haven't studied the geography of the early account of the Garden of Eden, David, but, having lived here, you know the geography of this section. The old account in Genesis said that a river watered the garden and from thence it parted into four branches. One of these was called the Pison; it is now the marshland that you

circled when coming northwards here this afternoon. The second, the Gihon, is the modern Hindia. The third was Hiddekel, which is a channel flowing from the Euphrates into the Tigris and which formerly was one of the upper tributaries of the Tigris. The fourth was the river Euphrates itself. The more you live in this country, David, the more you will find the old Bible stories have a real historical value. But they must be read intelligently, as Oriental accounts written by and for an Oriental people.

"Speaking as an engineer, it seems to me that the Flood of Noah bears a close resemblance to the terrible floods that come down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. As you know, the land near these rivers does not come down like banks but actually falls away from it at a slope of five feet to a mile. Noah's Ark, built on the threat of the flood, floated southwards with the current until it came to the swirl and backwash where the Tigris and Euphrates meet. There it stranded on one of the desert mounds which border the Shatt-el-Arab marshes, just as the Babylonian cuneiform account of the Deluge states, and the mounds there are called by the Arabs 'the landing-place of Noah' to this day.

"There, in the fertile marshland, the descendants of Noah spread and developed, and the first cities mentioned in the Bible, Babel, Erech, Nineveh, and the rest, were all in this land of Mesopotamia, between the rivers.[1] Near where the Ark stranded, arose the city Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham was born, and from whence he went with his whole tribe northward and westward until they came to the land of Palestine and laid the foundation of the Jewish nation.

"I have spent thirty years in Egypt and Babylonia," the Englishman continued, "and I don't hesitate to say that with the carrying out of a few improvements, controlling the floods of the two rivers, and creating an enormous natural reservoir, the Garden of Eden could be restored. I have surveyed every foot of the ground accurately, and by modern workings we can secure a head of water forty feet higher than the ancient Babylonians possessed. Thus the whole valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates from Hit clear down to the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab could become even more luxuriant than before."

"Do you suppose Germany knows that?" asked

[1] The Garden of Eden according to Sumerian tradition was in this section, but it is a later tradition than that of Genesis.

David, beginning to see the purpose that lay behind the Mesopotamian campaign.

The engineer smiled.

"You can be perfectly sure she does," he answered. "If the Berlin to Bagdad railway is finished with German capital, and if Germany gets from Turkey the concessions to construct the irrigation works along these two rivers, she can have a tremendous colony here, in one of the richest valleys of the world, easily able to support a population of ten million people, and a permanent granary for the extension of her Eastern schemes."

"They might even rebuild Babylon!" suggested the boy.

"Never by that name," the engineer answered. "But it is sure that a modern city would be built near there, or near Seleucia or Ctesiphon. That narrow neck of land between the rivers is an all-important strategical point.

"But," he continued, stretching his arms with a mighty yawn, "Germany's never going to have the chance to do that, now. By bringing on this war, she's given England a chance to step in. Germany won't win the war, that's sure, for England has never lost any war that she has begun,

unless, perhaps, as an American boy, you like to consider the revolt of the American colonies a real war. In any case, Germany's way of making war is one in which, if she doesn't win in the first few weeks, her chances get steadily less. Mesopotamia will become the Garden of Eden again, but, unless I am mistaken, the overlordship will be in English hands, for England thoroughly understands how to handle Mohammedan peoples and is trusted by them.

"Now, David," he concluded, "I think you had better turn in and sleep, for we're breaking camp in the morning, as I want to get down and get in touch with the British at Basra."

"At Basra!" exclaimed David, in surprise. "Why, the Turks are there!"

"I know they are," the engineer replied cheerfully. "But, by the time we get down there, I shouldn't be surprised if the Tommies had already taken it."

"But how will you get through?" queried David, remembering the Turkish Army that lay between them and Basra.

"I haven't the ghost of an idea," came the astonishing reply, "but we'll manage to keep our skins whole, never fear. I always have, so far."

Willingly David went into the little house that the engineer had built and slept soundly in a small room thoroughly appointed after the English fashion. But, when a servant awakened him the following morning, the boy's mind ran back to the predicament in which they were placed and he racked his brain to try to imagine some possible way whereby they could escape the Turkish Army that lay between them and the sea.

At breakfast, David could hardly keep from questioning his host, but the big Englishman seemed perfectly tranquil, and gave orders to his servants and the headmen of his Arabs with regard to the dispositions of the day.

Not until the horses were actually brought up to the door, and both he and the boy were in the saddles would he say a word about his plans. Then, riding to the front of the party, he began to explain.

"In an Oriental country, David," he said, "never speak of secrets in a house. No vigilance will ensure that you will not be overheard. Not that Arabs are untrustworthy, but that their ways of thought are different from ours. I take this precaution although most of the men would follow me blindly anywhere. Most of them are

men whose freedom I have purchased from Turkish jails, in which they were illegally committed, and others are their friends and relatives. All are well-armed and there is no reason to fear a raid."

"Are you going to make a long sweep westward through the desert, then?" asked David.

"No," answered the engineer. "I am going to Bagdad."

The simple statement took David's breath away.

"But Bagdad is full of Turks!" he ejaculated.

The engineer nodded.

"But not of Germans," he answered. "One of my headmen went to Bagdad the day before yesterday to spy out the land. He can be trusted. He was a mail-carrier, who was robbed and half-murdered on the road by Arabs, and whom the Turks put in prison to starve to death because some of the mail of which he was robbed contained government money. It wasn't his fault that he was robbed, but he had to take all the blame. When I paid the sum of money that had been lost, they freed him.

"He says that all the German officers have gone

forward with the army that is advancing to the support of Basra. There are only a few German officials left in the city, and they are of lesser rank. The Turk, alone, is not difficult to handle."

"You mean he can be bribed?" queried David.

"That, sometimes, but not always," the Englishman replied. "The Turk is a curious mixture. As a political measure he will order and carry out massacres and wholesale atrocities in a way that makes the whole world shrink with horror, and yet, individually, he is courteous, chivalrous, and a gentleman. I think I can manage to make my way through, peacefully."

"And if not?" asked the boy.

There was a slight tightening of the eyes, and the English engineer, though by no means a young man, tightened his lips grimly.

"Then," he said quietly, "we might be compelled to remember that we are at war with Turkey."

David wriggled in his saddle, delighted but half frightened. There were not many people, he thought, who would cheerfully ride into a large and populous city of enemies, heavily garrisoned, and announce his intention of fighting his way out

if his orders were not obeyed. But the Englishman in the East is the Master. And he knows it. And the East knows it, too.

From Hit to Bagdad is two and a half days' ride and the sun shone high when they rode into the city of the Caliphs, the home of Haroun-al-Raschid, made immortal in the "Arabian Nights." They crossed on the famous pontoon bridge, a bridge of boats which has been there for a thousand years.

On the way across the bridge the engineer pointed to a cluster of new buildings some distance upstream.

"There's the terminus of the Berlin-to-Bagdad railway," he said. "There's a good deal of it built, you know, but the middle bit is mountainous and tricky engineering, and, before Fritz finishes the construction of that middle bit, the western terminus will be Paris, not Berlin."

The gilded minarets and domes of the mosques shone with a fierce glare as David rode into Bagdad with the engineer, but the boy who had been looking forward all the morning to seeing the city, suddenly forgot the wonder of the past in the anxiety of the present.

The importance of the past had diminished.

The importance of the moment had become portentous.

It is one thing to read about going into a city of enemies. It is another thing to do it.

Cold chills crept along the boy's back.

The streets were filled with soldiers. Crowds jostled each other in the incredibly narrow streets. They pressed closer. Many faces were threatening. The trotting horses were slowed down to a walk.

The engineer was well known in Bagdad and one word began to simmer through the crowd.

"Inglezy!"

The engineer spoke to the boy in an aside.

"Don't hold back your horse, David. Whatever you do, don't let him stop. If you have to ride through the crowd, ride through. If you have to ride over it, ride over. Keep your seat and your head and just ride on."

A fanatic threw up his arms and shrieked, in high-pitched Turkish.

"Ugly!" said the engineer, in an undertone. "Watch out, boy!"

The crowd surged forward. One man threw himself directly in the path of the engineer's horse.

A touch of the spur, a lift on the bridle and the good horse reared. The descending hoofs fell and one struck full on the man's shoulder, hurling him to the street.

The engineer looked neither to the right nor to the left. He rode on over.

Angry cries rang behind, and once there was a clash of knives.

"Don't look back, David," came the warning, "ride straight on."

They rode on, amid Turks and Persians and Jews, past Kurd porters staggering along with great burdens on their backs, callously pushing to one side droves of coolie women all but lost to view under enormous loose bundles of twigs and desert grass roots that are used for fuel, hordes of slaves from East Africa, and blue-eyed Christians of old Chaldean stock. A motley crowd, but David dared only glance at it through the corners of his eyes.

There were a few wonderful mosaics on some of the walls, a few enameled mosque entrances, a few massive old gates, but very few. Bagdad holds little of the ancient glamor. At one place, through the streets, David could see the bazaars in which the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid strolled,

WHEN TURK WAS MASTER.
Infantry marching to their billets, between the garden walls of Bagdad.

From "Sphere": U. S. Copyright, N. Y. Herald Co.

WHEN TURK WAS DEFEATED
A contingent of prisoners marching through Bagdad, under British guard, to their detention camp.

and where happened all the marvels of the Porter and the Ladies of Bagdad. Great walls of olden time loomed up on every side, while barred and latticed windows told of a harem within.

David realized little of all this. Though it had been one of his great desires to visit Bagdad, the exaltation of daring and the dark pressure of terror combined to hold him in an iron grip, and he rode on through the city whose threat seemed to suffocate him even as much as the smells and vapors of the crowded streets stifled him.

Suddenly a skinny hand shot out and seized the bridle of his horse.

For a second, just for a second, the boy hesitated, and then, like a thunderbolt, the lead-weighted butt end of the engineer's whip fell on the aggressor's arm. The bones, just above the wrist, broke with a sharp crack. There was a sharp cry of pain, echoed by a rising roar of anger from the crowd around.

But the engineer's face was set like flint and the two rode on. The tumult shrilled behind them, but the imperturbable ignoring of the crowd's presence saved the situation. They came to the gate of the Governor's palace.

"Inform His Excellency the Governor that His

Excellency the Administrator of Waters for the Sultan desires to see him," came the astonishing order.

A puzzled Turkish sentry took the message.

The crowd, now fallen silent, waited to see what reception the Englishman should receive.

In a moment the soldier returned.

"His Excellency says, 'Enter,'" he announced.

The engineer sat stock still.

"His Excellency says, 'Enter,'" the soldier repeated.

"Where is the guard?" demanded the engineer, sharply. "Is so little honor paid to the Commander of the Faithful in his city of Bagdad that one of his chosen servants should enter alone, like a suppliant?"

The soldier, looking frightened, salaamed. He returned a moment later with the captain of the guard, and half a dozen men.

Gravely the engineer dismounted, followed by David, who was watching every move.

The bridles of the horses were taken by two of the soldiers. Thereupon, preceded and followed by the suddenly summoned Guard of Honor, the

Englishman and the American boy entered the luxurious chamber of the governor, its walls, crude and bare, but the floor covered with old Persian rugs of incredible softness and beauty.

The governor was utterly bewildered, but received his guests with stately ceremony. He knew that he had given no order for the guard to turn out, and consequently supposed that the captain of the guard knew some details regarding his visitors concerning which he, himself, was not aware. He knew, vaguely, that the Sultan and the Germans had been planning the irrigation works on the Euphrates. He had heard, also, that the engineer had always been described as an Englishman. What he did not know was that the Englishman was a famous engineer in Egypt and had been summoned by the Sultan during peace-time, to make a complete survey of the irrigation works. What Turkey and Germany did not know was that this survey was being done in the expectation that English diplomacy would yet secure the concession and thus a powerful British post might be established not far from one of the most important and inaccessible points of the Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway.

After salutations and the customory lapse of time for ceremonial, the engineer came directly to the point of his visit.

"I need an escort of fifty men," he said, curtly. "Also, I need a river-boat as far as Amara."

The governor protested in dismay. There was no boat. There was no river transportation left in Bagdad. The Turkish force that had gone down to Basra had taken absolutely everything left in the city. Even the governor's pleasure-launch, he complained, had been commandeered. And, while he thus talked glibly, the governor's mind worked fast. This Englishman, he decided, must be a German who had been posing as an Englishman for the better pursuit of the crooked intrigues of diplomacy.

Thus satisfied within himself that he had found the clew, and knowing that German agents were the most powerful friends possible in Turkey at the time, the Governor bethought him of a power-launch belonging to one of his assistants which had been laid up for some minor repairs. He had reason to remember it, for he had been sharply taken to task about it by the German commandant in Bagdad, a few days before, on the ground that he lacked energy in pushing the Holy War, know-

ing that every river craft, no matter how small, was in urgent demand.

"It can be ready in two days, Your Excellency," the Governor explained, at the same time deciding that he would send a message by relay to the Commanding Officer of the army that had started south, to inform him as to the visit of this stranger Englishman. Thus, if the engineer were a German, he would get credit for assisting him; if there were anything dubious, he would get credit for having put the Germans on their guard.

"That will be soon enough," replied the engineer, and David wondered, for he knew that every minute was valuable. "Where is this boat to be found?" he asked.

The governor, delighted that the matter had been arranged so simply, sent for the captain of the guard and ordered him to escort the engineer and David to a little yard by the river-side.

The engineer touched David on the shoulder.

"Our luck is holding," he said, in a low voice. "This yard is below the bridge of boats."

David wondered what this could imply, but there had been so many surprises since their entrance to Bagdad, that he did not even ask for an

explanation. He could not resist remarking, however,

"It'll be a tight fit for an escort of fifty soldiers in that boat. It would be small for half-a-dozen."

"We won't need the escort," the engineer remarked.

Which set David wondering more than ever, for he had thought that the engineer's principal purpose in risking exposure and imprisonment in Bagdad was the securing of an armed escort.

"Where are we going to stay while we are in Bagdad?" David asked.

"That will be the Governor's affair," the engineer replied. "If I have duly impressed him, as I believe, quarters will have been provided for us."

So it proved. Not far from the house of the Governor, which was situated close to the Citadel, the Captain of the Guard led the two travelers. Their Arab servants had already been installed, and, in the simple fashion of the East, all that would be needed was already provided.

After the evening meal, the engineer said loudly,

"Come, David, we may find something in the bazaars to please us."

A lift of the eyebrows told the lad that behind this suggestion there was a plan. He rose and got ready to go out. Before leaving the room the engineer, unobserved, slipped David a revolver.

One of the minor officers of the guard, who had been posted with four of his men outside the house, ostensibly as a guard of honor, but, as David well realized, far more as a measure of suspicion, called two of his men and they fell into line behind.

"Three against two," remarked the engineer significantly.

He led the way to the bazaar by which they had passed that morning, and went from one little cubby-hole to another. Like many eastern bazaars, that of Bagdad was of the ancient type, a street of small square rooms, or cubicles, without windows, open to the street. Few of them were more than ten feet square. Some were so small that they held only the figure of the merchant or workman, as the case might be, who carried on his trade under the eyes of the passers-by.

Suddenly the Englishman stopped at the stall of an iron-worker and asked the price of a large and heavy pot of hammered metal. The customary haggling followed, but the purchase was finally

effected. A porter was then called and ordered to take the great jar to the house where the engineer was staying.

Then, without a moment's warning, the engineer wheeled round on one of the soldiers,

"Follow him to the house. Direct him there. See that he does not steal it!"

Unconsciously the Turk saluted, German fashion, and then hesitated. He had received no orders from his officer. The latter, being of minor rank, had neither the wit nor the quickness to assume responsibility, nor, even if he had, would he have dared countermand an order given by any one as authoritative as seemed the English engineer, who, moreover, he knew, had been received by the Governor only that afternoon. He gave an affirmative nod, and the soldier followed after the porter.

"Two against two!" declared the engineer, in English.

It was clear that a project was in the air, and David observed that the engineer now turned away from the bazaars and began to walk toward the lower part of the city.

The minor officer now edged closer.

"If His Excellency will permit," he said, "the way is not yonder, but hither."

"My way is yonder," was the curt reply, and the engineer walked on, David finding trouble to keep pace with him. Being the time of evening prayer the streets were almost empty, and the small party advanced swiftly.

This put the minor officer in a frenzy. He realized that some plot was in the wind, he had no means of communicating with his senior officer, and he was afraid that the Inglezy was trying to escape. Calling the other soldier, therefore, he bade him go as quickly as possible to the bridge of boats, which they were now approaching, but to go by a shorter way, and to tell the keeper of the bridge to say that he had received orders to let no one pass that evening. The soldier went, as directed, and was lost to view in the tangle of small streets.

"One against two," declared the Englishman grimly, when he saw him go.

Then, swerving sharply to the left, as though he knew the streets of Bagdad thoroughly, the engineer made his way through some narrow alleys and lanes, coming to the edge of the riverside,

close by where the power-launch was being repaired.

Wheeling swiftly, the engineer then drew his revolver and pointed it full at the chest of the Turk.

"If you move," he said, "or cry out, you can bid farewell to the sun!"

The soldier, a true Mohammedan, saw at once that he had no chance for defense.

"All things happen by the will of Allah," he answered quietly, surrendering at once.

"Take away his weapons, David," said the Englishman, still covering him with the revolver.

So David took away his rifle and ammunition and his trench-knife—for he was equipped in all points in the fashion of the German Army—and placed them in the power-launch, as the engineer directed.

"Now, lad," he continued, "take out your revolver and keep him covered. If he tries to escape or cries out, shoot him on the spot."

With a show of bravery David drew his revolver, but in his heart of hearts he wondered if he would have the courage to shoot in cold blood.

The soldier saw this, and rolling a cigarette, he said,

"Youth, do not think that I am in any fear of your gun, for I see in your eye that you would not shoot. Still, be not troubled, for the Inglezy is a man of war and I have no weapons."

The engineer overheard, and turning around, declared:

"You are right, Soldier, better submission to Fate than an early death."

Then, swiftly working with a few tools, though making as little noise as possible, the engineer set together the parts which had been taken apart by the Turkish mechanics. Within half an hour, a sharp rattle from the exhaust pipe told that the engine was working.

The engineer took out his revolver again.

"Jump in, David," he said, "while I keep him covered," and, as soon as the boy was in the boat, the engineer boarded it, still keeping the Turkish soldier covered with his gun.

"Shove off, boy," came the next command and the launch shot out into the stream.

The "chug-chug-chug" of the engines rang out against the silence of the night, but the launch made no advance. She floated out on the surface of the river, leaving the Turkish soldier seated on

the freeboard of a river canoe, laid up for repair in the boat-builders' shop.

"She isn't going ahead!" cried David in alarm.

"I know it," said the engineer calmly, "she's in pretty poor shape, and, what's more, I think that wily rogue of a governor knew it, too. I doubt if there's a Turkish mechanic who could repair this boat. We would not have been let go in two days, nor yet in twenty-two. But you see, David, I ran the engine for a few minutes so as to make the soldier believe that the boat was in good order. He will report that to the Governor and we shall be safe."

"How?" said the boy. "If the launch doesn't work, they'll be able to catch us in half an hour with a belum" (river canoe).

"They could," the engineer agreed, "but they won't. The sergeant, or whatever he is, back there, will return and report that he saw and heard us start off with the full noise of the engine. I imagine this has been a tophole launch in her day and they'll think we've got a good start."

"That wouldn't prevent them chasing us," said the boy.

"But every boat which could move under her own power has already gone downstream with

the German and Turkish force," came the retort.

"That's right," said David, "I'd forgotten that. Then all that fleet is down on the river in front of us, a little way below."

"It's there," the Englishman said cheerfully.

"Between us and Basra?"

"Exactly."

"Then I don't see," replied David, "where we've gained much by leaving our horses behind and taking to a boat."

"If I can get this pesky engine tuned up by daylight," the engineer replied, "you'll see why. The Tigris twists and turns so that you have to go two or maybe three miles to one on land. On the other hand, by the shore route, you have to make long and time-wasting detours to get away from the swamp lands and the marshes. Taking it all in all, a horseman can go only twice as fast as the current of the river.

"If then, the Governor should send a horseman down the river to warn the troops that we are in this launch, the news would reach them before we could float down so far, supposing that we depend only on the drift of the current. If, however, I can get the engine to work, we can go twice as fast by water as a horseman can travel by land.

I can't do much by night, however, for I haven't a light. We'd better try to get as much sleep as we can and I'll start working on the engine with the first glimpse of dawn."

Worn out by the day's excitement, David lay down on the bench of the launch and, soothed by the gentle rocking of the boat on the Tigris current, he sank into a deep sleep from which he did not waken until he heard the tap-tapping of metal on metal. Opening his eyes sleepily, he saw the engineer busily at work on the machinery of the motor-boat, and sunrise over the distant hills of Persia and the lowlands of the Tigris Valley.

Rested and refreshed by his sleep, the lad called out,

"Can you fix it, sir?"

"I hope so, my boy," the engineer replied, "though some half-mechanic has been trying to repair it and has made the break ten times worse than it originally was. But I know quite a bit about engines."

The tinkering went on as the sun rose. They passed many goofas, queer round boats that look like floating bubbles of tar that progress with a spinning motion, black boats pitched within and

without like the Ark built by Noah on the same river thousands of years ago.

"There's a bit of a village over there," the engineer remarked presently. "You might try to get some grub. I'll risk running her in as far as the bank with a temporary adjustment."

The "chug-chug" rose with its insistent clamor on the stream, until the boat grounded a hundred yards from the shore.

Obedient to the order, David had just put one leg over the side of the boat to wade ashore when the engineer stopped him, on seeing the villagers crowd to the waterside.

"Never mind, lad," he said, "they're going to come out to us. Be ready to shove off if they mean to be ugly."

The river Arabs looked ugly enough and David noticed that every one was armed with a rifle.

"We want to buy some food," the Englishman shouted in Arabic.

The villagers came closer.

"Shove off," said the engineer in a low voice, "and the second she's afloat get your head behind the bulwarks. Arabs always fire too high."

David put his will back of the push that he gave

to the pole and the little launch shot out into the stream. The engine chug-chugged contentedly as half a dozen bullets came whistling through the air.

"We won't eat breakfast at the 'first table,'" remarked the engineer with a laugh, stopping the engine as soon as the boat was out of gunshot.

The boat drifted idly but steadily down the river, the three mile current taking them steadily but slowly past the monotonous mud banks of the Tigris. A single hut, of the river-Arab type, merely a brushwood shelter large enough to hold the family canoe and the family, offered a better chance of breakfast. Some dates, a handful of meal, and a freshly caught fish changed hands for some Turkish gold.

The morning was well advanced when the engineer straightened up and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. The sun was cruelly hot.

"There," he said, "I think she'll do now. We're short of gasoline, though, and I don't know where to get any more. However, we can't afford to delay, for if a messenger has been sent, he'll have been riding all night. The little craft will have to do the best she can. I'll take her at easy speed though. You'd better take the wheel,

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

TYPICAL ARAB HUT ON THE BANKS OF THE TIGRIS.

The family canoe is seen in the shade. This extraordinarily primitive structure reveals the simple life of tribes in Mesopotamia.

David, as I'll have to keep my eye on this rickety engine."

Again the silence of the Tigris was broken by the sharp exhaust from an over-engined motor-boat. Once or twice the craft grated over the top of a shoal in the river, for the Tigris is incredibly shallow. Once she actually stuck and could not be floated until both the Englishman and the boy had jumped overboard to lighten her. But she went on, just the same. All that day they ran the engine, they drifted during the night, the engineer steering between naps. Twice he roused the boy to help him off a shoal on which the boat had grounded. On the morning of the next day, Kut came in sight.

The bridge of boats just above Kut-el-Amara was open, or, to speak more correctly, broken, as a result of the passage of the river craft which had accompanied the main body of the Turkish advance force. Kut, being occupied by a garrison, was a point of danger.

David stared with all his eyes. He had expected the engineer to stop the engines. Then, both lying down so that they would be hidden by the bulwarks of the boat, he expected to float slowly by Kut, hoping that with Oriental disin-

terest, no one would be sufficiently concerned to go and capture a drifting boat.

Not at all.

Almost at full speed and making all the noise of which she was capable, the motor launch puffed up importantly to a dilapidated dispatch-boat, with a Turkish officer smoking in the stern.

"Von Behrein Pasha has gone farther down river, I suppose?" the engineer asked, in fluent Turkish.

The officer nodded, indolently.

"And where is the petrol station?"

"There is none here," was the reply, "but a barge with some tanks was towed down from Bagdad. It is moored half a mile downstream."

The engineer thanked him politely and, in the interchange of salutations learned the officer's name, and that of the local commandant. The motor-boat then sped off to the gasoline barge.

On arriving, the Englishman rapped out a sharp order to the sleepy attendant and tossed him a piece of money.

The man hurried at the sight of the silver; a pipe was run from the barge to the boat and the small tank filled. And, as the gasoline gurgled into the tank, the engineer said to David, in Eng-

lish, but in a low tone so that the attendant could not hear that a foreign language was being spoken:

"See that horseman coming into town at full speed? In all probability, that is the courier from Bagdad, telling of our flight."

"What shall we do now?" queried David.

"Run for it," the engineer answered laconically, and, shoving off from the barge, he set the head of the launch down river.

High-hulled and tall-masted mahaylas with their brown sails slightly bellied by the wind, were passed as though they were anchored in the slightly rippling brown river. Little reed-hut villages appeared on the banks, for in this section there was no sign of the black tents of the desert dwellers. In this stretch the Tigris passes through—and over—sand-drifts, and stretches of powdered dust, which every little eddy of wind whirls up into a choking horror.

The speed made by the motor-boat, however, not only created a pleasant breeze, but speedily left behind the sleepy and mud-built Kut-el-Amara with its rim of dust-covered date-palms, Kut-el-Amara, a little later to go down to history as one of the world's great battle-fields.

From Kut-el-Amara to Amara is 180 miles by river, but the little motor-boat reached Amara during the night. There, as at Kut, a bridge of boats spanned the way. Ordinarily toll is to be paid, and the rafts do not come down the river at night. The bridge-keeper was not present, however, so the engineer quietly shut off the power half a mile out of the town and floated down with the current until the motor-boat was tap-tapping softly against the bridge of boats. Then he clambered on the pontoons, opened the bridge and floated through. A near-by motor-boat fastened to a wharf offered an opportunity of abstracting some gasoline. Again a half-mile of drift and then the echoes of the night were stirred by the throbbing of the motor-boat as she sped down the river.

Amara was safely passed.

Rejoicing came a little too soon, however, for scarcely had the launch gone a mile down-stream, when with a suddenness that woke David with a sudden start from the half-sleep in which he was holding the wheel, the bright, white glare of an electric searchlight swept up and down the river.

With one quick turn the Englishman silenced the engines and said in a hoarse loud whisper,

"Hard over to the left bank, boy! Quick!"

It was too late.

The searchlight wavered, searched up and down with quick insistent jerks, then caught the motor-boat full in its glare.

A sharp command in Turkish rang out across the water.

"Cut loose!" cried the engineer. "We're safe only if we can keep to the channel!"

He threw on full power.

The exhaust of the boat cracked out sharply, as the launch darted like an arrow out of the path of the searchlight.

For a second David hoped that they had escaped, but the searchlight picked them out again in a moment. They could hear a trampling of feet on the deck of the ship, whose form could not be discerned because of the blinding glare.

The engineer chuckled.

"If that were a British gunboat," he said, "every gun would have been in action by now. These Turks are slow!"

But they were not too slow.

The words were hardly out of his lips, when a sudden heavy bark told of the firing of a gun.

"Funny!" exclaimed the Englishman, "that

sounds like a four-pounder. The machine-guns ought to have been ready first."

The shot went far over their heads, and, running at racing speed, though all too slowly, the motor-boat began to draw away.

Seconds passed, though they seemed like hours, and then came the crackle of a machine-gun. A splash of water fifty yards to the rear of the boat, showed where the bullets struck.

The engineer set up a sharp yell, as though in agony.

David's heart sank.

"Hit hard?" he asked.

The engineer grinned.

"Not a bit of it," he said. "That's an old trick. If the other chap thinks you're hit, it's human nature to hold fire for a few seconds. Every second means a better chance. They'll fire again, in a little bit. Keep your head down."

The surmise proved correct.

Almost simultaneously the four-pounder and the machine-gun fired together. None of the shots came even close.

"Rotten shooting!" remarked the engineer, "but we needn't complain of that."

David made no answer.

Alarmed, the engineer stepped to the stern and looked at the lad, fearing a stray shot might have killed him.

The boy was fast asleep. Even while the shots had been flying overhead, exhausted nature could stand no more. For two days and well into the third night he had been in the boat, much of the time at the wheel. Even the nights he had slept, he had been awakened several times. Now, without a word, without being conscious of it, exhaustion had taken him, and he slept.

"Poor youngster," said the engineer, taking off his coat and covering the lad with it, "he's worn right out."

He did not stop to think that he, himself, had been awake almost continuously, working over the engine of the boat.

The motor-boat was racketing down past Ezra's tomb, one of the sacred spots of the world to the Jews, and a spot like a great green-and-yellow jewel on the ruddy muddiness of the river and the waste of desert and marsh beyond. The drum is decorated with slender spirals of yellow and blue and red tiles, which end in a broad band of deep primrose yellow; from this springs the dome in perfect curves, a blend of every shade

from sea-green, through lilac, mauve, and blue, to a deep purple-green. Beside the Tomb is a large khan, in a half-ruined state, constructed of yellow brick, with many arches and balconies. A number of palms shade the place.

Thousands of Jews make an annual pilgrimage to the tomb of this prophet, who is honored second only to Moses. He was born in Babylon and was the author of the Chronicles, of Ezra, of Nehemiah, and of Esther. It was by reason of his influence that Xerxes allowed the Jews to return from their captivity.

Traveling at full speed, Ezra's Tomb was soon left behind.

"Can't you take a nap now, sir?" David asked, when he had stripped and taken a plunge over the side for a morning wash and dressed again.

The engineer, red-eyed, but clean-shaven and chirpy as ever, shook his head.

"I can't take my eye off the engines," he said. "They're running all right now, but they broke down twice during the night and I've had to patch them up. If I can just scoot by Qurnah and Basra, now, as we have through Kut and Amara, we'll dine in the officers' mess to-morrow night."

"Have we gasoline enough for that?"

"No," the engineer said, "we haven't. But I'm going to try a little piracy."

"How? Piracy?" the boy queried.

"You'll see."

A few hours more brought Qurnah in sight. Going at full speed, the launch passed some of the houses at the brink of the river, but to none of these was there a motor-boat fastened.

"I'm simply going to commandeer the first boat I see," he said, "but it looks as though we'd have to pass the usual barrier of a bridge of boats first."

A bend of the river brought them in full sight of the pontoon bridge of boats. The motor-boat reduced speed.

"What on earth is the matter?" queried the engineer, shading his eyes with his hand. "Are we going to run right into a passage of troops? That might be awkward!"

He slowed down further, but the figures on the bridge of boats did not move. They seemed to be halted.

"Why not wait?" queried David.

"I don't dare," was the brief reply. "It's dead sure that the Turks at Amara will have sent

that boat that fired at us down the river after us, and I don't know how close she may be behind, owing to our two breakdowns during the night. They may be round a bend of the river and almost on us, for all that we can tell. No, there's nothing to do but go on."

The motor-boat approached the bridge of boats.

"That's a company of soldiers," the Englishman said. "What's up?"

The motor-boat slowed down at the pontoons.

An officer stepped forward.

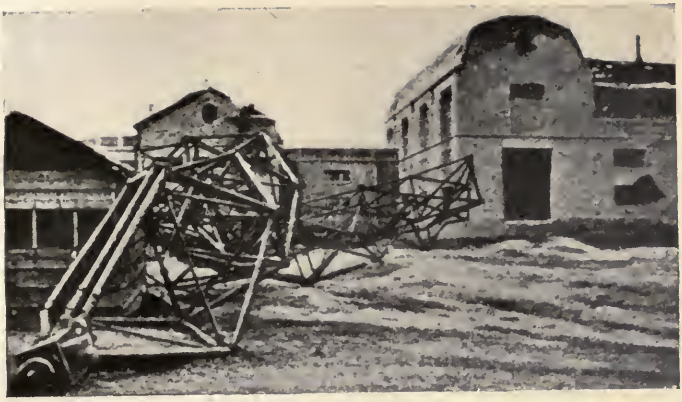
"His Excellency, the Administrator of Waters?" he inquired politely.

Immovable as a mask, the expression of the Englishman did not change.

"The same," he replied. "And to whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"I have the unworthy distinction of being a member of General von Behrein Pasha's staff," he said. "We are in receipt of a telegram from His Excellency, the Governor of Bagdad, regretting your hasty departure without an escort."

"A telegram?" queried the engineer. "This is a mistake, sir. There is no telegraph line between Bagdad and Qurnah."



FORBIDDEN TO THE MUSSULMAN!
A Bagdad centre of Western power. The wireless station in communication with Berlin destroyed by the Germans upon the British capture of the city.

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

FORBIDDEN TO THE CHRISTIAN!
A Bagdad centre of Eastern power. The golden-domed mosque of the prophet Kazimain, said to have been poisoned by Haroun-al-Raschid.

The Turkish officer smiled.

"A courier brought the message to Amara," was the reply, "and a German Field Telegraph unit, attached to this army, ran a military line yesterday for communication between General and Brigade Headquarters."

"Take me to your commander at once," said the engineer stiffly. "I will inquire into the meaning of this detention."

"I am sorry, Your Excellency," replied the officer, "but I have orders to take you to a place where you will be kept under guard."

"You mean we are prisoners?"

"We hope to have the pleasure of your company until the end of the war," was the courteous reply.

The Englishman looked at the soldiers, at the bridge of boats and at the river. David could see that he was still meditating chances of escape.

There were none.

"At your service, then," he said, and he and David marched off into Turkish captivity.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE OF THE MIRAGE

The English engineer's dash for liberty had not succeeded, owing to unforeseen difficulty of a German Field Telegraph Unit having run a line south from Amara, which had always been an important garrison point, but, on the other hand, its very boldness had resulted in a very profound respect for the fugitives.

No one was quite sure as to the real importance of the engineer. The Bagdad Governor's confused message threw an element of mystery over the whole affair. The very fact that the engineer declared himself to be an Englishman, when England was at war with Turkey, and such a statement would be self-condemnatory, was, to the Oriental mind, a sure sign that he was not English. Yet his flight down the river was more than suspicious, it was convicting.

When brought before the Turkish commander of the forces, the engineer conducted himself with so much dignity and so much authority that the

Pasha was puzzled. Moreover, the German artillery commander, who was the Pasha's chief counselor, was utterly taken aback by some allusions made by the engineer which seemed to imply that he was within the secrets of the German High Command. Purposely, the Englishman claimed not to know German, and then, as though absent-mindedly, snapped out a sonorous German phrase.

Accordingly, one of the better houses of Qurnah was set aside for the fugitives, and though they were kept rigorously under guard and not allowed to leave the house under any pretext, the imprisonment was not wearing. In one way, it was an excellent thing for the boy, for the engineer, having much time on his hands and finding that David, like most American boys, knew very little of any mathematics except commercial arithmetic, spent several hours a day teaching him mathematics and the rudiments of irrigation engineering. Greatly to his pleasure, he found David a singularly quick and apt pupil, and the first few weeks of imprisonment passed pleasantly enough. Being November, it was almost the only time in the year when life in Mesopotamia can be made even moderately comfortable.

On December 4, while David and the engineer were working over their mathematics, the sharp click of advancing feet was heard outside, the rug which served as a door was lifted and a British officer entered, his head bandaged, his arm in a sling, and his uniform torn and dust-covered. But his air was almost jaunty.

"They told me I should find a compatriot here," he said. "Let me introduce myself—Captain Pomeroy of the 2nd Norfolks."

"And my name is Testahen," said the engineer, rising and shaking hands.

"Not Sir James Testahen, of the Assouan dam?"

The engineer nodded.

"Why, this is tophole!" the officer declared. "I'm ever so glad to meet you, Sir James. I knew you were somewhere in the country, but I didn't know just where."

"I'm just here," the engineer declared, with emphasis, "for a time at least." Then turning to the lad, he added, "and this is Professor Surch's son, David."

They shook hands also.

"David joined me in an attempt to run the gauntlet down to Abadan, or at least as far as

Basra," the engineer explained, "but the Germans had run a field telegraph line down from Amara, and so they nabbed us here."

"Sorry on your account, but I can't say I am on my own," the captain answered. "It's much pleasanter to be together. Not that I think we'll be here very long," he added.

"Why not?"

"Our chaps will take Qurnah in a week."

"You think so?"

"Sure of it. If Colonel Frazier hadn't thought it wiser not to take too risky a chance, we might have got in here yesterday."

"Just what has been happening?" the engineer asked. "You see, Captain Pomeroy, I've been up at Hit all this time and very little news filtered through. I know nothing later than that the Sultan had declared a Jehad. I see you're wounded, so there has already been some fighting."

"Yes," the captain replied, "there's been a little trouble, but I think we've done fairly well so far. You heard, I suppose, that in October, an advance force consisting of a couple of English and some Indian regiments were sent from India to stand guard at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab."

"That I knew," the engineer answered, "and that, quite naturally, they anchored in the pearl-fishing harbor of Bahrein under the Sheik of Koweit."

David nodded. He, too, knew all about England's alliance with the Sheik of Koweit because of the pearl fishery and piracy and felt quite proud of himself that he was able to follow the allusion.

"We stayed there until November 2, when we got official word that war had been declared between England and Turkey and that our first move was to collar Fao. We didn't waste a great deal of time, but, without waiting for reënforcements, just got right at it. The gunboat *Odin* opened the ball with a quick but altogether satisfactory bombardment. Then, while the lead was still being pumped over, our fellows went in under the cover of it. We sent three landing-parties ashore, each of them wildly envious of the other. In fact, not a few wagers were laid as to which should get into Fao first."

"Was that where you got hurt, sir?" queried David, who was anxious to hear some details of real fighting.

"No, my boy," answered the captain, "I'll tell

you about that when I come to it, that's if you want to hear the yarn?"

And, without waiting for a reply he turned to the engineer and continued:

"I don't think the Turks were jolly well expecting us so quickly, because they set about the defense in quite a leisurely fashion. The Indian troops rushed ahead like furies, and the enemy seemed disconcerted. The Turks hadn't got used to the idea that fighting had really begun and this was the first brush. They gave way almost at once and our chaps took the town.

"As a matter of fact, the enemy got away in such a hurry that some of the guns were left loaded and ready for firing, none of them were dismantled and all sorts of valuables that could have been packed up in an hour were left. Friendly Arabs, however, told us that the Turks had not retreated in panic, but had merely hurried to join the Basra garrison already on its way down the river to attack Abadan."

"That's the oil center, isn't it?" queried the boy. The captain nodded and went on,

"This meant that hours were precious and we started up the river to Abadan. We got there the evening of the next day, just a few hours

ahead of the Turks. Of course we pushed a line ahead of the island, to keep the Turks from shelling it. There's nothing much at Abadan except the oil tanks, and a few incendiary fires there would have blown or burnt the place up.

"As a matter of fact, one shell did land in Abadan, but it fell where it couldn't do any particular harm. It was a narrow shave, though. If the enemy had only hustled a little from Basra, or started a day earlier, they could easily have taken Abadan, and even if they couldn't have held it, half an hour would have been enough for them to set fire to the refineries, to blow up the oil tanks and to destroy the pipe-line into Arabistan. But that few hours by which we beat them to it, saved the loss of thousands of pounds' worth of fuel and maybe some scores of lives, for we should have had to take the island, anyway, and it would have been quite a job if the Turks had posted guns on it."

"Of course," the engineer agreed, "but it would be hard to hold Abadan by itself. You'll have to take Basra, before any kind of a foothold is sure."

"Basra!" explained the officer in surprise.

"Didn't you know? Why, we took Basra ten days ago!"

"Then if we had just passed this one bridge of boats at Qurnah, we'd have run right down to you?"

"Rather! You wouldn't have had to go more than two miles downstream to run right into the hands of English outposts."

"And we had enough gasoline for that!" exclaimed the engineer. "But I couldn't send the launch against that bridge of boats like a battering ram!"

"And if we had," remarked David, "we'd have been filled full of holes. Those soldiers on the bridge had modern rifles, every one of them. I noticed it, because I supposed the Turks wouldn't amount to anything as soldiers."

The captain shook his head.

"Don't think that, my boy," he said, "the Turk is one of the best fighting men in the world when he's roused. That's why we want to win as much of these river banks as quickly as we can, before he does get waked up."

"Yes," said the engineer, "you're right, there. It's easy enough to talk about Turkey, politically,

as the 'Sick Man of Europe,' but we oughtn't to forget that Turkey has been master of a big empire and has held it in control for a good many centuries. It takes military ability to do that, look at it how you will. But you must have had some trouble taking Basra, I should think. The garrison there was nearly ten thousand, wasn't it?"

"Fifteen thousand, easy," was the reply, "counting in the reënforcements that were sent down. But it wasn't such a difficult bit o' work, not nearly so hard as we expected. That is the actual fighting wasn't, but the way it had to be done was hard enough."

"Do you mind telling us about it?" the engineer asked.

"All right," the captain answered. "Don't mind if I give just a straight-ahead story of it. I'm not like one of these newspaper chaps, you know, all I can tell is just what I saw and what the other fellows told me.

"As soon as we had taken Abadan, and set a garrison there, General Delamain sent a strong force ashore at Saniyeh, on the Turkish side of the river, and we dug in. We didn't see any very special need for hurry, for that country all around

there just looks like the jumping-off spot to nowhere, but we were glad of the trenches next day. One of the Koweit Arabs came down and told us that a force had been on the way from Bagdad for over a month and had almost reached Basra.

"You see, the Germans had known in advance that they were going to force Turkey's hand to declare war, and so they started that force from Bagdad at the end of September."

"Why do you suppose they sent them so late, sir?" David asked. "Didn't the war start in August?"

"You'll have to ask Sir James about that, my boy," said the captain, "we military men don't know much about the political end of things. But I did wonder about that myself. What do you think it was?" he queried, turning to the engineer.

The latter lit a cigar which he had gratefully accepted from Captain Pomeroy.

"I don't think there's much difficulty in seeing that move," he answered. "I don't think Germany wanted to draw Turkey into the war at all."

"Why not?" interrupted the captain. "I should have thought she wanted all the allies she could get."

"No," the engineer replied, "on the contrary, Germany wanted to win with the fewest alliances possible. There were a great many reasons why a German victory without the aid of Turkey would have been better for her than a victory with the aid of the Ottoman Empire.

"The first, and most important result of a victorious Germany would have been prestige. Secondly, if she had conquered in France and Russia without Turkish aid, she would not have to consider the necessity of handing over part of the spoils of war to a Turkish ally. Then the still untapped resources of Turkey would have been available for an assault on the British positions in Egypt and India, and the Holy War might have become a real thing. Therefore to have embroiled Turkey at the beginning of the war would have been an unwise move."

"What changed that idea, then?" queried the captain.

"The opening of the war," was the reply. "When the gallant defense of the Belgians at Liège stopped the German impetus; when the French at Charleroi and the English at Mons held back more than five times their number by sheer bravery; when the heroic French at the Battle of

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE ACROSS THE DESERT.

Draught-camel team pulling a wire-laying cart with boxed-in wheels for crossing the loose sands.

the Marne won such a splendid victory that they made all humanity their eternal debtor, and when the English Navy held the Seven Seas, then Germany realized that she must abandon all her hopes of winning a victory by herself.

"She realized, then, that she must not only call on her allies to help in her plans of victory, but even to help save her from defeat. It was because of that, I think, that the Bagdad garrison did not begin to move south until the end of September, and to move a marching force from Bagdad to Basra, over five hundred miles by river, and probably four hundred by land, is at least a month's task, especially with the wretched water transportation they possessed on the Tigris."

"That seems reasonable," the captain agreed.

"Moreover," the engineer continued, "there was the question of munitions. Turkey had purchased from Germany and Austria eight million marks' worth of equipment. Her artillery was in perfect condition. But the first weeks of the war in France had shown that all former estimates as to the number of shells required per gun were far too low. No one had dreamed that modern guns would require such an appalling quantity of shell. Therefore, in order to make the Turkish

artillery effective, Germany had to send munitions and shells which she could ill spare from the western front.

"The second question was that of transport. The German drive for Paris had created a tremendously long line of communications, and Germany was hard put to it to keep her troops on the Russian front and on the French front supplied with all the necessaries of war. To devote locomotives and rolling-stock to the long haul to Constantinople and thence by the Anatolian Railway was not only costly but delaying. Even with perfect service, to send a car of munitions from Skoda to Bagdad is a long, long travel.

"The third most serious problem was that if the Turkish Army had to be taken to the battle-front in full strength it would weaken the garrisons, and the Turkish empire is not held together by any inner bond but solely by Turkish military domination. The mobilization of the army, therefore, meant Kurdish revolts, Armenian revolts, and Arab revolts. Moreover, since the Turkish empire is almost exclusively agricultural, every added soldier meant more land uncultivated or more herds untended, and the German need for food was great. When Germany forced Turkey

into the war, it was a confession of weakness far more definite than most of us have yet realized."

"I hope so," the captain replied, "though I think we'll have trouble enough yet. And, as you say, Sir James, the fact that the force sent to reenforce Basra did not start until late in September just gave us time to establish the entrenched camp at Saniyeh before the Turks reached us.

"On November 11, the Turks sent out a reconnoissance party to test our strength. Naturally, we didn't want them to know too much, so we sent out a couple of Indian regiments, and beat them back in a short, sharp skirmish with small losses on both sides.

"This was an indecisive sort of affair, not big enough to let either side know the other's strength. Two days later, though, two more brigades sailed up the Shatt-el-Arab, completing the Sixth Division.

"During these two days the advance force of the Turks had dug in at Sahain, just about ten miles up river from our camp at Saniyeh. We had no aëroplanes at all, not one, so there was no way for us to find out the strength of the enemy. In this pancake-flat country, you can't send out cavalry unperceived. There's nothing but the

old wasteful tactics of sending your men forward to feel the strength of the enemy in a fight."

"Please, I don't understand," put in David. "Does that mean that you have to have men killed off just as a sort of scout and to judge by the quickness with which they are killed off, how strong the enemy is?"

"That's rather a crude way of putting it, David," the captain answered, "but you're not far out. Aëroplane reconnoissance now, however, saves all these lives." And he continued,

"Since reënforcements had arrived, the Poona Brigade, which was the first one that had landed, could be sent forward at once. The men were tired, of course, but they might as well take the first blow and, if they had to fall back, the other two fresh brigades would be ready to support. So, without waiting for the reënforcements to disembark, the Poona Brigade was sent forward.

"Now, you know, when you look on the lower part of the Shatt-el-Arab from the decks of a river-boat, the scenery looks most attractive. On both shores, right down to the water's edge, are graceful date-palms, vines trailing from tree to tree, scarlet pomegranate in the undergrowth and white clusters of oleander over the water's edge.

Then behind, here and there, can be seen fields of grain."

"Yes," the engineer remarked, "that's the part that used to be thought the Garden of Eden. That's where the Sumerians located it, you know, and that has always mixed people's ideas up. The Garden of Eden of the Bible is above Hit; the Garden of Eden of the Babylonian tablets is down where you were on the Shatt-el-Arab. But go on with your story."

"As I was saying," the captain continued, "from the river side, the shore looks like the Garden of Eden. But once you're ashore, it's a lot different. The palms and the pomegranate blossoms are there sure enough, but the belt of them doesn't average half a mile wide, and beyond it is the desert, while every now and then a very slight dip of a few feet reduces the apparently dry frontage to a swamp covered with green scum and festering vegetation, with a variety of smells not to be matched in any part of the world I've been in, so far."

"And this is November," remarked the engineer, "the one lovely month in the Mesopotamian year. Captain Pomeroy, wait until you've seen the seasons round! But I interrupt."

"It was bad enough taking Sahain," the captain resumed, "because the footing wasn't so bad. We drove the Turks back without much loss, rather wondering, indeed, that they gave way so easily. As a matter of fact, they had only retired upon Sahil, where the main strength of the advance force had entrenched.

"This meant a real fight, and the whole division moved forward to attack. It was nasty fighting, regular guerrilla warfare. The Turks fought from behind the boles of palm-trees, from the banks of canals and from specially prepared dug-outs, patterned after the German fashion. One of the things which hurt us most was that the German officers had told the Turks that we tortured the wounded, and so many of our poor fellows were shot when they were going to help the enemy wounded into ambulances.

"After we had broken back all the advance guard, we came to the main camp. The Turks had entrenched in front of an open plain, their left on the river, their right covered by groves of date-palm. As we were working with naval and military forces combined, it was decided to attack the enemy's left, near the river, rather than to try to flank his right, which would have been

a less costly maneuver. As it was, we had to dash across that open plain, without enough shelter to make a match-box of, while, at the same time, our gunboats went up the river, in spite of artillery fire, and enfiladed the hostile trenches from the stream.

"Our chaps were just splendid. The two or three days of guerrilla fighting had put their blood up, and now that they had a chance for open fighting, they just ate it up! The way those Indian troops went over that plain was a caution! The Turks didn't even wait for the shock. Although they were in superior numbers, on finding that their artillery could not stop the advancing wave of men, they broke and fled. If they had held their ground long enough to get actually into the fighting, we wouldn't have found it easy, for the Turk is a gamy fighter once he begins, though apt to give way before a battle. Our losses would have been heavy then, but, as it was, we lost only thirty-eight men. The Turks suffered heavily, for we had a couple of field-gun batteries that did good work in the pursuit, and thoroughly disorganized the fleeing army.

"This was too good a start to lose and we pushed on as hard as we could. Part of the

troops were transported on a couple of river steamers and others proceeded by forced marches up the river, the gunboats leading the way, and shelling the fugitives in a way that must have tried their nerves sorely.

"A few miles below Basra, three steamers had been blown up in the channel in order to prevent our boats going up. A battery of Turkish guns was posted so as to cover the obstruction and the Turks seemed to think that would hold us back a week or more.

"Time was more important than caution just then, so we slapped right ahead, the Indian troops just enjoying themselves. We sent a couple of detachments ashore to rush the guns, while our gunboats sent some four-inch shrapnel among the gunners. Nasty stuff, that four-inch shrapnel, especially on these flat plains where it's as easy to hit a hostile battery in action as it is to register bull's-eyes on a target in gun-practice, and, as the Arabs put it, the Turks speedily betook themselves 'to the midst of the Heavens,' or, in other words, they bolted."

"Not that I blame them much," commented the engineer, in a low voice so as not to interrupt the narration.

"Then the gunboats edged up and poked at the outermost of the three sunken ships with their noses, gently shoving her stern around until she lay lengthwise in the stream. The Tigris did the rest. Within a couple of hours the current, sweeping around the sunken ship, made a new channel and the gunboats and steamers edged carefully by.

"It all seemed rather queer to me. We were working in an abominable country, a long way from any base of supplies, against forces about four times our own in number, and yet we went ahead with hardly any trouble. The last twenty-eight miles to Basra we did in a day—I grumbled at that myself, for it was killing to the men—but we got in there absolutely without hearing a single shot fired. The Turks had got out the day before and the Arabs, of course, were looting the city for all it was worth. We jolly soon stopped that sort of thing, though. So that's how we got into Basra.

"Rotten sort of a place, Basra," he continued. "Ever been there, Sir James?"

"No," the engineer replied, "I came into Mesopotamia from the Damascus side. What's Basra like?"

"A hole!" was the frank reply. "The real town, the Arab town, that is, lies about two miles from the river, in a palm grove, bordered by the desert. There's a sort of half-river, half-ditch, the Ashar, which runs up from the Shatt-el-Arab to the town. From it a couple of hundred irrigation ditches spread off to right and left and wander among the date-palms. When the ten-foot tide comes up the Shatt-el-Arab from the Persian Gulf, it fills the Ashar and all the ditches, and then the creeks, or streets, whichever you like to call them, are gay with little belums. When the tide goes out, the main creek and all the ditches are nothing but fetid mud. The town is a typical Arab town, mud-built, with here and there a shabby, cheaply-decorated mosque. The larger streets and bazaars are roofed over with date-leaf matting and the sun's rays only trickle through. It's hotter than an oven and I never knew that there could be so many smells at a time in one place."

"And this is November," reminded the engineer, "wait until summer comes, Captain! How about it, David?"

"Yes, sir," the boy agreed, "it feels about forty times hotter than now."

"Let's hope the war's over by then," the officer replied.

"It won't be," the engineer answered, "but don't let's get into prophecy. You haven't told us, yet, how you came to be taken prisoner."

"Oh, that!"

David noted the characteristic English distaste for talking about oneself, but the engineer pressed for the story.

"You see, Captain," he said, "after all, it's quite important that I should be informed on what's been going on and your telling me will save General Barrett some trouble."

Which simple remark gave David an inkling of the importance of his comrade, though he little guessed what a dominant personality in the East was this same irrigation engineer.

"Well, Sir James," the captain continued, resuming his story, "after we got to Basra, we thought we were through. The wharf that the Germans had built for use in the continuation of the Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway was quite useful, but we supposed that our principal work was done. I really don't think any of us imagined that England intended to do any more than hold the Shatt-el-Arab from Basra down, so as to pro-

tect the mouth of the Zarun River, down which the pipe-line comes from Persia, and to make sure against the possibility of any raids on the oil center of Abadan.

"But no sooner had we settled at Basra, begun to build a permanent camp on the river edge, and make a solid two-mile road to Old Basra than we learned that the Turks, under German direction, were contemplating a combined attack on us. Their army, we learned, was in three sections. The largest is here at Qurnah, under Subhi Bey, and our information states that this force contains about 40,000 men. Then there is a less well organized but even larger army now being formed under Suleiman Askeri, preparing for a descent on Basra by the route of the old fortress of Shaiba on the Euphrates. The third group is over on the river Qarun, threatening the pipe-line and acting as a flank attack to Abadan. Including hostile Arabs, there are about 140,000 men gathered for the attack. We've got about 60,000.

"We didn't know of any more reënforcements actually on their way to us, although informed that more would be sent later, but General Barrett decided that we should take the initiative just the same. We already had a small force at Shaiba.

So, being afraid that they might be attacked in force and defeated—a thing which would be very dangerous, for the Turks would exaggerate the skirmish into an immense victory and the resulting loss of prestige would make things all the harder for us among the Arabs—the first move we made was to send reënforcements to Shaiba.

"At that time we supposed that the enemy opposing our little garrison was only a small body. We hadn't the faintest idea that it was the largest of the three Turkish armies. That's where we needed aëroplane reconnoissance in the worst way.

"Just four days ago, the Turks came down and launched a surprise attack on the little garrison holding Shaiba. Although we had no knowledge that this was the day the enemy had set for the attack, it chanced that on that very day we had started a small body of reënforcements. They were but a few miles on their way when there came the sound of firing, sure evidence of a surprise attack. The reënforcing column advanced at the double, and an aide galloped back with news to the Commanding Officer.

"The shortest way to the attacked garrison was across a great area to the westward of Basra, held

back by the Shaiba Bund embankment. This was flooded waist-deep.

"While a mad rush was made for every belum and every kind of boat that would hold water, in order to cross this flooded area, most of the men plunged through it, holding their rifles over their heads and exposed to a distant but galling fire. Many a wounded man dropped in the water and was drowned. At one place the water was so high that it came to the armpits of the men. But they plunged through, notwithstanding, and came to the scene of battle.

"The first relieving force, which had marched round on the desert, had been pinned back by a larger force of the enemy. They had not been able to reach the garrison at Shaiba, which, itself, was surrounded by a force of Turks at least ten times as great in number. The pressure on the garrison was relieved by the arrival of the men who had been plunging across the shallow lake.

"The battle lasted for several hours. I hate to say it, Sir James, but our men were beaten. In that open flat land, with no chance to dig trenches at all, rifle and machine-gun fire worked terrible havoc and men fell heavily on both sides. In a costly fight such as this, numbers become the de-

ciding factor, and, even after the reënforcements arrived, we were outnumbered at least seven to one.

"The Commanding Officer was just about to give the order to retire—he told me, afterwards, that the order had been trembling on his lips for ten minutes or more—when to the absolute and unbounded amazement of us all, the Turks, at the very second of their victory, turned tail and ran.

"It was inexplicable. It was disconcerting. Nothing ever looked more like a trick. But the effect of machine-guns on a retreating enemy is well known and our chaps dashed in pursuit. We were still wondering what was the cause of it, when one of the officers of an Indian regiment solved the problem.

" 'Mirage!' he cried, pointing behind us.

"There, to our rear, were vast billowing clouds of dust. Through the dust, clearly, as clearly as I can see you both now, could be distinguished great columns and bodies of men, supply wagons and even pieces of artillery, or so it seemed. Rank beyond rank, serried line behind serried line, these columns advanced. Yet we know that no such army existed in Mesopotamia.

"It was our pitifully small supply-train, which

had driven round by the edge of the desert, since the wheels would sink in the sand and mud of the flooded area, and which, by a queer freak of mirage, had been repeated in strata after strata of air until it looked like an army of a million men advancing to the front."

"No wonder they ran!" said David.

"No," agreed the captain, "yet I should think the Turkish officers ought to have known natural phenomena better. After all, it's their country."

The engineer shook his head.

"It isn't," he said. "This is the country of the Arab, not the Turk. The Turk is primarily a mountain dweller and pays little heed to the lands under his dominion except as a means of squeezing taxes out of them. Our men, trained in India, know far more about it. But," he continued, "you couldn't afford to pursue the Turks very far up the Euphrates Valley."

"No," agreed the captain, "we couldn't, because that would give the enemy a chance to cut us off from the main body. Besides, Basra was much too rich a prize to risk. You see, Sir James, Basra boasts 20,000 inhabitants and there are 11,000,000 date-palms in its plantations. It was a rich haul and the Turks would naturally be

anxious to take it back. That was one reason why we can't be satisfied with holding it as an advance post. We have got to take Qurnah, in order to be safe to develop Basra as a military base. But it'll have to be done quickly, if at all. I'm confident, though, that we'll take this place within a week."

"I hope we do," agreed the engineer, "though, even if the troops do take it, the Turks are likely to send us back up the river."

"Perhaps the governor of Bagdad might like to see you again, sir," suggested David, laughing.

"What was that?" asked the captain, scenting a story.

"We'll tell you afterwards," the engineer replied. "Go on with your story first. What happened after the mirage had worked a miracle at Shaiba?"

"The next thing," the captain answered, "was to send a good strong force to the Qarun River to patrol the pipe-line and to hold back the Arabs. There are 10,000 hostile Arabs, under Turkish officers, ready to raise the deuce with that whole Qarun section, but our political leaders have worked the trick on the Sheik of Muhammerah so smoothly that the Turkish force has never yet

dared to come to an actual clash. They may, on Persian territory, yet, but they haven't risked it so far. If they do, that will bring 20,000 well-armed Arabs to our standard, a thing which would checkmate the Turk on the Qarun.

"We heard that Suleiman Askeri committed suicide, as soon as he learned that he had ordered the retreat of his troops because of a mirage, and thereby had missed his country's best chance of a victory. Of course it put the Bedouins on our side. When the Turks broke at Shaiba, great bands of nomad Arabs, who had no love for either side, Arabs who hated their Turkish overlord, and who equally resented the coming of the foreigners, desert warriors who had been hanging on the flanks of the battle with the intention of plundering whichever army was vanquished, fell on the fleeing Turks, harrying them and taking spoil of the stragglers as far as Khamisseyeh, ninety miles away.

"We already had the support of the Arabs on both sides of the lower reaches of the Shatt-el-Arab, and the victory at Shaiba decided the hostile desert tribe that their better chance of plunder lay in spoiling the Turks instead of us. The

mirage, therefore, had not only gained a battle, but had turned the tide of nomad Arab hostility against our enemies.

"The biggest part of the work was in front of us, however. Subhi Bey was solidly encamped at Qurnah, with a very considerable force, officered by Germans, as you know."

"Yes," put in the engineer, "Von Behrein is in charge of the artillery end, here. That much I found out."

"He is, eh?" The captain looked grave. "Maybe Qurnah will be a tougher nut to crack than I think, then. I hope not, though. Our little affair of yesterday was just to feel out Subhi Bey. Colonel Frazier came up quite close to the town yesterday, with the Norfolks and some of the Indian troops, led by three gunboats, two armed launches, and an armed yacht.

"We were put ashore about three miles down and marched, or floundered, up the river bank. There had been some rain the day before and the mud down here is horrible. Our men were sliding and stumbling forward when quite a snug little party of Turks rushed us from a hidden redoubt in a palm-grove. We beat them back without much

difficulty and charged forward to take the redoubt, only to find ourselves in the middle of a strong Turkish position.

"I gave the order to retire and we were getting away in good order when two bullets struck me at the same time, one on the head and one in the arm. I dropped, I suppose, for the first thing I knew, I was in a dressing-station behind the Turkish lines and a German doctor was working on my shoulder. Most unpleasant sort of chap he was, but a good surgeon. He seemed quite resentful of our troops having come at all, and I gathered that the Germans had expected a walk-away. They had figured on fortifying Abadan and Saniyeh and so having an advanced base threatening India.

"I got one evidence of German feeling. While bending over my dressing he murmured in German:

" 'What foolishness to take care of one's own enemy!' "

"How was it," asked the engineer, "that you got off with nothing but a shoulder wound if you were also struck in the head?"

"I puzzled over that," the captain said, "but as I got nothing but a thundering big bruise there

I suppose I was hit by a spent bullet which must either have ricochetted from the slimy mud or else been deflected from the trunk of a palm-tree."

"Narrow shave," the engineer remarked.

"Right-o!" agreed the captain. "And my arm isn't so badly hurt either. I'll be able to get right back into harness the minute our men march in here."

"Always supposing we aren't sent to Amara or Bagdad before that happens," put in the engineer.

"We'll hope for better luck than that," the officer replied. Then he continued: "Now, I think, it's my turn. Suppose you tell your story. How did you get down here, Sir James? Qurnah is a long way from Hit!"

"We've had some adventures, too!" the engineer admitted, and told in detail the story of the motor-boat race down the Tigris.

That evening, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the guard notified the prisoners that the Commandant was no longer able to arrange for their food and so forth in their present quarters. Every facility would be given them to purchase supplies, if they wished to do so, otherwise they

would have to go to the common prison camp, with other prisoners of war.

"Jolly awkward," said the captain. "One doesn't take a pocket full of sovereigns on a reconnoissance."

"And I got rid of most of mine," added the engineer, "impressing those beggars in Bagdad with plenty of baksheesh."

Whereupon David spoke up promptly, glad that he had the chance of being of service.

"When Father had to go away in such a hurry," he said, "he told me to use a cuneiform tablet that he had found in Babylon, which is bordered with gems. I've given away a couple. I'm sure Father would like me to give it to you sir," he said, handing the tablet to the engineer, "if it could help you and Captain Pomeroy. Only," he added, "I'd like the tablet back afterwards, because Father entrusted it to me. He said the inscription was very important as a historical record."

"That's jolly decent of you, David," said the engineer, taking the tablet and examining it with a great deal of interest. "I don't know a great deal about stones," he continued, "but some of

these are rubies, I'm pretty sure. This will help us along a few days in any case."

Calling for the soldier, the engineer bade him send for a jewel merchant in the town, and after lengthy chaffering a gem changed hands. The Turkish Commandant paid a visit to the prisoners later in the evening, spent a friendly half-hour, proved himself a most courteous gentleman as well as a gallant soldier and begged his English captives to accept a gift of tobacco.

Six days later, while David was busy working over his mathematics and the two men were discussing political probabilities in Mesopotamia, a distant rattling of shots was heard, and, not more than an hour later, a British officer suddenly entered.

"Hello, Pomeroy," he said, as quietly as though he had seen him that morning. "I heard you were in here."

"Confound it, Somers," said the captain, jumping up and shaking his brother officer's hand, "when did you get taken?"

"I get taken, man!" exclaimed the other, laughing, "I'm not taken. Qurnah is! The old flag's flying over Turkish headquarters now. We col-

lared Mezerah first thing this morning, sent the sappers six miles to the north, crossed the river there where no one was expecting us and came down on the other bank, surrounding the town on every side. The Turks didn't even have a chance to fight. They laid down their arms. They had to! Unconditional surrender!"

"I was sure we'd do it!" exclaimed the captain.

Then, turning to his companions, he introduced them, and David noticed the instant surprise and respect which the mention of his comrade's name created.

"The General will be delighted to hear of your safety, Sir James," said their rescuer. "I will send him word at once."

Then, turning to the lad, he said, hospitably,

"Come along, David. Young America will dine to-night in the officers' mess!"

VIADUCT BEFORE EXPLOSIONS.

VIADUCT AFTER EXPLOSIONS.

THE FIRST CHARGE.

THE SECOND CHARGE.

THE THIRD CHARGE.

THE FOURTH CHARGE.

Australian Official Photo.

BLOWING UP THE BEERSHEBA RAILROAD.

Demolition of the Aslus Viaduct, built by Germans and Turks during the war Upon the capture of Palestine, it was rebuilt by the British.

CHAPTER VII

THE BLACKEST DAY

Qurnah being held purely as a military position, there was no place for David in the British camp. Having no knowledge whether his father had succeeded in escaping, yet unwilling to leave the country, David found himself obliged to decline a kindly invitation from Sir James Testahen, whose duties called him to England now that the irrigation survey was enforcedly abandoned. He offered to take the lad with him and place him in care of friends until the war was over.

"You see, sir," the boy answered, "Father told me to try to find a Mr. Ferguson, in Basra. He is an old friend of Father's. Since the English are there, it ought to be safe for me to stay, and Father will expect to find me there."

"Very good," the engineer replied, "perhaps you had better do so. But if you don't find this American in Basra, let me know. I am going down to Abadan to stay a few days. If you find your friend, telegraph me to that effect; if not,

telegraph that you are coming, and meet me down there. In any case, you ought not to stay in Mesopotamia alone."

With the engineer's aid and the friendship of the British officers, David had no difficulty in finding a vessel to take him down the river. Craft of all sorts were plying between Basra and Qurnah, bringing supplies and munitions up to the advanced base and taking wounded men back to the base hospital at Qurnah, for skirmishes of a minor order were going on continually.

With characteristic English spirit, the first thing that the incoming victors had done had been to commence permanent local improvements. Drifting, or rather sailing down the river in a high-hulled mahayla, David was surprised to find, at his journey's end, the vessel being moored to a substantial wharf.

There are few things which have done more to make the British Empire the power that it is than the English system of bettering the conditions of the natives wherever the Union Jack flies. The English had been in Basra but a little more than a month, yet quays had been constructed on the river-bank and a two-mile road had been built from the quays to Old Basra. Turkish tax ex-

actions were at an end. Arab looting and robbery by violence had been quickly stopped. Even-handed and impartial justice had been established, and sanitary measures were in force, a thing unknown in Mesopotamia during the entire four centuries of Turkish rule.

It was on the very first day that David was in Basra that he saw a little incident which explained to him, more than a thousand statements could have done, the manner in which England makes friends of Eastern peoples.

It chanced, that a couple of days before David's arrival, some soldiers had been chaffing each other about their respective merits as crack shots. One of them, who was very proud of his skill, purely as a matter of showing off, raised his rifle and fired at a stork on her nest, the bird being a long distance away. It was an excellent shot and the mother stork fell off her high-perched nest, dead.

Now the soldier either did not know or had forgotten that the stork is regarded with peculiar veneration by the Arabs, because they have a tradition that he clacks his beak and tries to say "Allah! Allah!" at the morning and evening prayers when the muezzin proclaims the hour from the minarets. Consequently, a strong local

resentment arose which came to the ears of the Commanding Officer, and the soldier was put under arrest.

Now the real cause of arrest was disobedience of orders, because reckless and unnecessary shooting is at all times forbidden, but at the same time, the Commanding Officer thought it would be a good lesson for the rest of the men if he should make an example of this one. He therefore ordered a somewhat curious sentence.

The body of the stork was placed in a coffin, hung with crape, and set in the middle of the market-place, and the offender was ordered to do sentry-go over it eight hours a day for a week, two hours on and two hours off, beginning at six o'clock in the morning. The Arabs regarded the situation gravely and seriously, and decided among themselves that the English must indeed be a just race, since they would punish their own people for outraging the customs of a conquered city.

David had no difficulty in finding Ferguson. Acting upon the engineer's suggestion, he appealed to the Director of Local Resources, a post entailing the organization of the Arabs as allies in providing supplies for the troops. He knew

Ferguson's name at once and gave the boy explicit directions how to find his house.

Ferguson, a quick, affable, jerky sort of man, grasped the situation in an instant. He greeted the boy as if he had known him all his life.

"David Surch," he said, "son of old Dead-Bones Surch—don't take offense, that is what we used to call him at college—come right in! Hungry? Of course!" He shouted for a servant.

"Make yourself at home. So long!" and he was off.

It was while David was staying in Basra that the news came in of the first attempt to take the Suez Canal. Some official accounts had been received, but the first definite description came in the form of a letter from the archæologist to Ferguson, asking for news of David. The boy, of course, had written to his father from Qurnah immediately upon his rescue, but he had addressed his letter to Jerusalem, in care of the Palestine Exploration Fund, to which place he supposed his father to have gone. From there, undoubtedly, his letter would not have been forwarded, in any event, even supposing it had reached there, which was highly improbable, since all postal communi-

cation with enemy countries was at a standstill.

The archæologist's letter, or rather that portion of it which dealt with the attack on Egypt, was explicative and to the point.

"You see, Ferguson," he wrote, "the Egyptian campaign is a necessity to Turkey. Every alliance in war is based on a selfish reason, and Egypt is the only bribe that Germany can offer to Turkey. Now the invasion and conquest of Egypt is a sea-power matter, and as long as the Allies hold the sea, there's not much danger.

"Right at the beginning of the war, as you remember, the German warships *Goeben* and *Breslau* escaped the Allied Mediterranean fleet [1] and steamed into the Golden Horn. This escape was taken by Turkey as an evidence that German warships could patrol the sea when and where they wished.

"Again, also at the beginning of the war, the Khedive of Egypt, Abbas Hilmi, was entirely in the power and in the pay of the German-Turkish ring, by which, under the guise of 'nationalist' movements, the Young Turks at Constantinople were to win their reforms and the Cairo Nationalists were to be freed from English restriction. The Imperial German Bank financed both these movements.

"Germany, however clever she may be in military matters, is weak in diplomacy. Almost invariably she makes a mistake in judging the char-

[1] For the significance of the *Goeben* incident and the dramatic way in which it was carried out, the reader is referred to the author's companion volume, "The Wonder of War at Sea."

acters of peoples. Vain of her Secret Service system, she relies upon the reports of her agents, who, naturally, like to present their work as important.

"German agents in Cairo told Berlin that the Cairo Nationalists were strong, when as a matter of fact, they seem to have been very weak. Berlin was informed that Egypt was ready to revolt and that the Egyptian Army would turn on its English superiors. Berlin also put a great deal of faith in the Sultan's proclamation of a Holy War. Each and every one of these ideas were wrong.

"I don't pretend to be a diplomat, and being an American, I've never bothered with European politics, but I could have told them better than that. The point lies in this: there are more Mohammedans in the world under English rule than under Turkish rule and they are better satisfied. That's no ground for starting a Holy War.

"The natural result was that, as soon as war was declared with Turkey, the Khedive, instead of leading his Cairo Nationalists in revolt, promptly ran away. He went first to Italy which was then neutral, thence to Vienna and Constantinople. Egypt was made a British protectorate with Prince Huessein Kamel as Sultan.

"I've just come across the Sinai desert, and I realize that Egypt is as well defended by that desert as if she had an army of a million men there. No wonder Pharaoh didn't pursue the Children of Israel. His army would have died of thirst, if he had tried it.

"Think of it, Ferguson, a hundred and more miles of stony and waterless desert divided from

an equally arid mass of mountains by a tract of waterless sand. The region is rainless. Not a cloud is ever seen in the burning sky. With the exception of the dry and stunted scrub in the hollows of the southern mountains, Sinai is dead; cursed by an everlasting thirst; silent with the curse of eternal death.

"To transport a modern army over this stretch, with men, transport animals, artillery, and the rest seemed impossible. The Turks would never have dreamed of trying it. But their child-like faith in the Germans was touching. Full confidence was placed in the German chief of staff, General von Kressenstein, who directed Djemal Pasha's army.

"It must be admitted that the Germans and Turks together did very well. They did succeed in crossing the desert, though nearly all the heavy artillery had to be left behind, and they crossed it with over 30,000 men. A light railway was built to carry the supplies. But, though I don't pretend to understand military matters very well, it seems clear to me that their principal weakness lay in the fact that the whole transport force was consumed in merely getting the army there. No provision was possible for keeping the army, once it was there. Success required that the Suez Canal must be taken by storm. It was the old German trick of believing that everything could be secured at the first smash.

"The British officers here say that the actual campaign was well handled. The Germans and Turks had anticipated a sharp defense at El Arish where the British had always kept an advance post, but there they met no check at all. The El

Arish post had been withdrawn as too costly to defend. That left open to the Turks the three caravan routes to Suez, the only possible lines of advance. Contrary to general expectation, the British did not try to defend these routes, though the two southern could easily have been controlled by forts. England was taking the ground that she was only defending the interests of Egypt, and decided to fight from the Suez Canal, rather than to treat it as a military campaign.

"Now the Suez Canal is 90 miles long, and at least 40 miles of its length consists of stretches of lakes, especially Ballah, Timsah, Great Bitter and Little Bitter Lakes. As an actual matter of fact, the only points where a land army would have any chance at all of forcing the passage of the Suez by pontoon bridge, constructed under fire, or by rafts, would be between El Kantara and Toussoum, a distance of about thirty miles. Yet those thirty miles are among the most important thirty miles in the world. They are absolutely necessary to civilization.

"As I look back on the last few days," the letter continued, "it seems to me that the French aviators and aëroplanes deserved a lot of praise. Desert flying is quite a trick, so I'm told, but the Frenchmen were in the air all the time. As an attack, like that on Suez, should be of the character of a surprise, the aviators utterly crippled the Turkish plans. On the flat sands, through the defiles, along the wadys, we knew exactly what forces were coming and in what direction.

"The British had never a moment's anxiety. All the officers expressed themselves as sorry for the Turks, driven on by Germany to a hopeless

task, for to attack the Suez by land was hopeless. The British had a fresh-water canal along the whole length of the ship canal. They had a railway line, not a temporary military affair, but a good solid construction, with plenty of rolling-stock, running along the Egyptian bank. In the lakes were ships of war, French and British, in the wider stretches were torpedo boats and destroyers, in the narrow stretches armed navy launches covered every foot of water with their buzzing activity. All along the line of the bank were carefully dug trenches, protected with sandbags and faced with barbed wire. Every section of the front was in telegraphic communication with headquarters. Guns were plenty, ammunition not scarce, and bases of supply were close at hand. The soldiers were unwearied and eager.

"What chance did the Turks have? They had toiled for weeks over the terrible desert, much of the time on short rations, all the time on the smallest possible amount of water. They had been unable to bring along heavy artillery. With vast exertion and much pluck they had dragged pontoons for the crossing of the canal. They had no opportunity for secrecy, the aëroplanes roared overhead and reported their every move.

"Then, when at last they reached the shore of the Gulf, they could not wait to dig permanent trenches, they could not affort to rest the men and prepare them for battle. Why not? Because of the supply of water. One of the greatest stimuli to the Turkish Army was the knowledge of the fresh-water canal on the other side of the ship canal. If they could rush the wider stream, the thirst-quenching liquid lay beyond.

"To do the Turks justice, in the face of an utterly impossible task, they charged gallantly. At Toussoum they almost succeeded in getting a bridge across; at Kantara, several pontoons reached the Egyptian bank.

"But the odds were too terribly heavy. With warships hurling a ponderous mass of metal, every Turkish battery was speedily silenced; with machine-guns dominating every inch of the shore, every Turk who crossed was instantly swept down; with a trench system that would have resisted a German massed attack, the fury of the travel-worn Turk could do nothing. A few hours sufficed to show the attack an utter failure. The British did not even pursue the enemy into the desert. There was no need. They knew a more relentless foe, thirst, would finish their task.

"The three routes by which the Turks advanced are now white with the bleaching bones of the remains of the army which straggled back, waterless and exhausted, to the headquarters at Beersheba and Gaza whence the advance was made. It would have been the same story had the Turkish force been ten times as great.

"I am convinced that the Suez Canal is absolutely invulnerable from the Sinaitic side. Of course, what is a barrier to the Turk is also a barrier to the British and if England retorts by a counter-charge on Palestine, which is more than possible, that desert of Sinai will have to be negotiated by Allied troops. I've done so much exploring in Southern Palestine that I shall stay in touch with the British here, as I may be useful here and could not be of much use on the Tigris, even if I could find a way of getting there."

The old archæologist then proceeded with a long series of instructions as to the best measures that should be pursued of finding the whereabouts of David, if so be that he had not yet reached Basra. "I don't say I'm exactly worried about him," the letter closed, "but, naturally, I'm a bit anxious. Wire me, if you have any news."

Ferguson was an American, shrewd and resourceful. By profession he was a promoter. He had originally gone to the East with the idea of forming a company which should secure a monopoly of the oriental rug output of the Persian and Turkish countries, knowing that if this could be formed, such a company could force down the prices paid to the rug-makers—for they would have no other market for their wares—and force up the prices asked from the buyer—for there would be no other source of supply. In this project, however, he reckoned without the Armenian merchants, who stick together very closely and are building up a similar monopoly on their own account.

Being wise enough to realize that it would be a long and complicated business to undermine the Armenian hold on oriental trade, Ferguson looked around to see what was the principal need of the

region in which he had practically marooned himself. At last he found it.

"You see, David," he explained to the boy, "when I found I was stuck out here, I knew that the only thing to be done was to discover some place where people spent money to do something which I could find a way to do for them cheaper. That's the first principle of business, my boy. Do something for somebody cheaper than he can get it done anywhere else, and make a profit on it yourself at the same time. Then you've got a sure thing. An Arab's human, after all, and I've noticed that a Mohammedan knows how to reckon in dollars and cents just as well as a Christian or a Jew.

"I thought of running a line of steamboats on the Tigris. I knew I could bring down merchandise from above Bagdad, slip round the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, and unload at Port Said on the Mediterranean, landing goods there at a cheaper rate than the caravan route to Damascus and the Anatolian Railway to Constantinople or the Syrian Railway to a port. There would be real money in that."

"Why didn't you do it?" asked the boy.

"Couldn't get the boats," Ferguson answered.

"The Tigris is so infernally shallow that nothing but river steamers can navigate it, vessels with three or four feet draught, at the very outside, and a steamer with three-foot draught can't cross the open sea. The Indian Ocean is pretty rough, and if I had to transship goods to an ocean steamer at Fao, I'd increase my cost terribly, as there aren't any port facilities there and Arab labor isn't worth shucks."

"So that plan went up in smoke," commented David.

"Yes, I saw that was no go. Just the same, I knew that the key to the Tigris market lay in transport. You know how goods are transported here?"

"You mean the rafts? I never saw one made, but we passed a few in that wild motor-boat rush down the river."

David had told his part of his adventures in company with Sir James Testahen, and the American, far too shrewd to miss the opportunity of getting in touch with a big man, had taken the boy down to Abadan for a final chat, just before the engineer left for England.

"Never saw a raft made?" laughed Ferguson. "Well, it isn't what you'd call modern ship-build-

ing. They take seventy-two poplar poles brought down from the upper reaches of the river and lash them together, thirty-six one way and thirty-six the other, crossways. Then they take the skins of goats and blow them full of air, tying the necks and legs tightly, and fasten those under the raft and all round the edges. An ordinary raft, eighteen feet square, will use from 250 to 300 of these skins. Then the front end is piled with merchandise and a hut for the boatman and sometimes for passengers is built with poles and strips of felt. Then that floats down the river, day and night, until it arrives at Bagdad or Amara, or even as far as Basra. The merchandise is unloaded. The poles are cut up and sold as firewood—they bring a good price in the desert where there is no fuel but twigs of brushwood, the roots of grass and camel-dung to burn—and the skins are deflated and carried north again on the backs of asses.

"Now," here Ferguson pointed his finger thoughtfully, "as soon as I grasped that system, I saw that there was a big loss of energy. If you can float a raft downstream, but have to tote the skins north again, you have an empty journey, which means loss. Moreover, in order to have

the mules to transport north, they have to come south. How would it be to work out a scheme to use the river both ways?

"Pretty soon I hit it off. I wouldn't need to build any river craft, there were the mahaylas, and some o' them hardly draw any water at all. Easy! I sent for a few auxiliary engines, put them in the lightest-draught mahaylas that I could find and started trading up-river. On my trips now I carry the goatskins for the raftsmen for less than mule-transport cost, and I give them the ride for nothing. Besides that, I'm always mighty careful to bring nothing down river except stuff that would be injured by the dampness of being close to the water on a raft, or too big for the rafts to carry easily, or for which the shippers are willing to pay extra for quicker handling.

"By not trying to compete too closely on the down-river trade and by charging very little to carry the goatskins up, I've got the friendship of the raftsmen and most of the traders on the river. It all came natural enough because I lived in a little town on the Mississippi when I was a boy.

"Then I went to work and made a chart for myself of the channel of the river; I guess the only one there is. That way I can keep from running

aground too often. Besides that, I guess, one way and another, I've towed off a couple of hundred rafts and mahaylas that have got stuck in the mud, so I'm pretty well known from the old Roman bridge that still spans the river above the black walls of Diarbekr clear down to Fao, a thousand miles and more. The Tigris is no slouch of a river! You're all right with me, son, but now that the war's on, you might as well be useful. I need pilots badly, and I can't teach the Arabs to understand the chart, even though I've made a sort of translation of it. You know English, you picked up a smattering of river knowledge from Sir James Testahen and you could read that chart right off like a book."

"I'd like that!" exclaimed David. "Anything's better than hanging around doing nothing. Besides I'd like to do my bit in the war, too."

"Just the way I felt," Ferguson agreed. "All right, then, I'm running up to Qurnah to-morrow. Suppose you come along, and learn that stretch of the river, anyhow."

This was the beginning of David's experiences as a pilot on the Tigris, experiences which a little later were to lead him into a very ticklish posi-

tion. The advance post at Qurnah was relinquished some weeks afterward, as the British did not have a large enough force to be able to patrol the pipe-line on the Qarun River, to hold Basra and Qurnah on the Tigris, as well as sustain an advanced post at Shaiba on the Euphrates. As a result, the Turks advanced again to Barjisiyeh, only a few miles north of Basra.

But a change was coming. This was forced upon British policy by the failure of the naval attack on Gallipoli in March, a failure which was a very severe blow to England's pride, one of the few cases, indeed, when a heavy bombardment by some of the most powerful vessels in the greatest navy in the world was productive of no result. Failure in the Orient is far more dangerous than elsewhere, for it injures prestige, and over wide stretches of semi-hostile territory, control is only held by prestige. In order to maintain England's grip on India, it was imperative that there should be a victory in the Orient.

For this reason, rather than because of the essential value of Mesopotamia in the World War, Sir John Nixon was sent with a whole army corps to Basra, to extend the British conquests and to report on the possibility of an advance to

Bagdad. Could Bagdad be captured, it would effectually put an end to Germany's most ambitious schemes for eastern conquest, and at the same time it would convince the Orient that British power was not only as strong as ever, but stronger. Bagdad, as the old capital of the Caliphs and the most important city of Western Asia, historically considered, was a prize worth seeking.

Sir John Nixon arrived in Basra on April 9, and David acted as pilot on one of the vessels which went down to the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab to come up as a flotilla of honor. The British commander did not delay operations. On April 14, five days after his arrival, he sent General Melliss against the Turks at Barjisiyeh and General Gorringe against the strong Turkish position at Ahwaz on the Qarun River. Both blows were successful. On the Tigris, the Turks fled back to Amara, again deserting Qurnah, and on the Qarun, the combined Turkish and Arab forces were decisively defeated at Ahwaz and driven clear away to Bisaitin.

When General Townshend arrived on April 22, the question of the capture of Amara was the next thing to be considered. Lying 200 miles up

the river from Basra, it was the most important town, after Bagdad, in the whole of Mesopotamia. It was a modern town, built less than fifty years ago, and was one of the branch centers of the German Imperial Bank.

As Ferguson had pointed out to David, the essential question was not so much a question of troops as of transport, a fact which he cogently put before the British Commander-in-Chief, and which the latter promptly referred to London.

"The principal urgency," wrote Sir John Nixon, "is for six paddle steamers, three stern-wheel steamers, eight tugs and forty-three barges. A properly equipped river fleet would double and treble the value of the army of occupation."

Fateful words!

But there was no time to wait for official action from England. The Turks had been driven away from Ahwaz and scattered over the country, but, if they should have a chance to re-form at Amara, it would be much more difficult to take the place. This led to the formation of what was known as "Townshend's Regatta."

After a conference, to which Ferguson had been invited, because of his thorough knowledge of transportation, the American came back and sent

From "Sphere": U. S. Copyright, N. Y. Herald Co.

THE VICTORIOUS TROOPS IN BAGDAD.

Indian Infantry marching along the road made by Khalil Pasha as a triumphant boast of the surrender of the British at Kut-el-Amara.

for David, who was now, to all intents and purposes, acting as his assistant, a position he was able to fulfill very well because of his thorough knowledge of Arabs and Arabic. His childhood training stood him in good stead.

The boy found his chief standing with his hands in his pockets and a mixture of frown and grin upon his face. He spoke with a hesitation that was rare in him.

"David, my boy," he said, "you and I have really got to take our part in this war seriously. General Townshend said to me this morning that he would have to commandeer my boats, but that, naturally, since I was not in the army, and not even a British subject, he couldn't ask me to risk my life in a forward movement. At the same time, he let me see pretty clearly that I could be useful."

"I think I can guess what you answered," hazarded David. He had come to know his chief well by that time, and Ferguson was happy with the boy, glad to relapse into his natural Americanism, always so out of place in Oriental surroundings.

"What do you suppose I said?"

"That you'd go, anyway."

"That's exactly what I did say," Ferguson replied, "but I said more than that."

"Something about me?"

The other grunted an affirmation.

"What did you say about me?" asked David, anxiously.

"What would you have wanted me to say?"

The lad thought for a moment.

"I think," he said, "I'd have wanted you to say that, being an American, you knew just about how an American boy would feel, and that while the United States wasn't in the war, we were on the Allies' side and that I'd be only too glad to jump in and help in this campaign wherever they thought I could be the most use."

Ferguson reached out his hand and gripped the lad's firmly.

"I said," he commented, "that you were game and could be counted on, same as me."

"Fine!" ejaculated David.

"So," Ferguson continued, "we're going to take a hand in getting the troops up-stream. Everything that floats is going to be used. I'm going to pilot the leading gunboat, and you'd better take our biggest tow and pull up some transport barges."

"I'd like to take one of the other gunboats!" pleaded the lad.

"Of course you would. You'd probably like to be the General in Command of the whole campaign. You can't, though. You're lucky to have a chance to do so much."

Ferguson smiled.

"Even so," he added, "you will be piloting a gunboat, so far as the Turks are aware. I've set all my men at work making dummy guns and funnels and so forth, so as to give the Turks an idea of a powerful fleet on its way up river."

"And when do we start?" asked the boy.

"To-morrow night," was the reply. "We can't afford to take more time, because news of our camouflaged 'navy' might leak to the Turks, and our biggest ally, right now, is surprise."

"Bully," the boy exclaimed, "count me in!"

The evening of the following day a motley collection of craft left Qurnah. There were gunboats, real and camouflaged, mahaylas, belums, and barges. On either shore scouting parties advanced in support.

This fleet was the last thing the Turks had expected. Well aware of the transport difficulties that the British faced, when they saw in the dis-

tance this big array of vessels, they were sure that naval reënforcements had arrived up the Shatt-el-Arab. Then General Townshend did a daring thing.

Instead of sailing this whole motley collection right up to the walls of Amara—where the pretense might have been discovered—he sent a party ahead, twenty-two men in all, to announce the arrival of the "fleet" and to demand surrender.

The garrison at Amara was 700 strong, and not badly placed for defense, but rumors of the Turkish retreat at Ahwaz had already reached Amara. Moreover, the non-appearance of even any remnants of that army convinced the Turkish garrison that the whole eastern force had been cut to pieces. In that case, Amara would soon be surrounded. Accordingly, the garrison surrendered, and the following day the British troops marched in without resistance, and David's barges, among others, landed the soldiers in the very heart of Amara.

Two days later the fragments of the missing Turkish division staggered into Amara, without any knowledge that the town had changed masters. The vanguard which approached the town was surrounded and compelled to surrender,

while the main body broke and scattered, fleeing up the river towards Kut.

In spite of the terrific heat, six weeks later the "regatta"—David still holding his place as an unofficial pilot on a transformed mahayla—was sent up the Euphrates against the Turkish force at Nazariyeh. The boy saw none of that battle, but General Gorringe secured an important victory, capturing the garrison with seventeen guns and a large quantity of war material.

Then came the summer.

From March to September, the Mesopotamian sun sets a record of heat and seldom, if ever, lets a day go by without raising the temperature to 110°. In the middle of the summer, there will be fifty or sixty days on end where the noon temperature is over 120° in the shade and between 130° and 140° under canvas.

David, though inured in childhood to the heat of the desert, was all but prostrated by the greater heat of the valley; the British soldiers died by hundreds from sunstroke and heat-exhaustion. Ice was a prime necessity, but in the first Mesopotamian campaign of 1915, there were no ice-manufacturing plants attached to the Medical Service. Not until November is the soldier

allowed to leave off the detested sun-helmet and spine-pad, and then only during certain hours.

If Mesopotamian Horror Number One is the sun, certainly Horror Number Two is Insects. Every town on the two rivers is surrounded with date-palms, and there are groves scattered in between. Along the Shatt-el-Arab, the groves extend for a mile depth on either side. These groves, or date-gardens, are intersected by small creeks and irrigation ditches which, though dry for months at a time, contain numerous stagnant pools where the mosquito loves to breed. And the mosquito, in Mesopotamia, carries not only malaria, but a variety of other fever-giving diseases. That first summer, there was no Sanitation Service to fight the mosquitoes.

Yet the sand-fly is by far a worse pest than the mosquito. It was the worst enemy the soldiers encountered. "Next to Germany," writes Egan,[1] "it is Turkey's most venomous ally and it has incapacitated thousands of men. It is so small as almost to be invisible and it mobilizes in the great deserts in armies of quintillions. There are times when every inch of air-space seems to be filled with sand-flies. No net was ever made that

[1] "War in the Cradle of the World," by E. F. Egan (Harper & Bros.).

is fine enough to keep them out, and they can get through anything but armor-plate. When they get a chance to settle on a man they proceed to dig in and eat him up, producing a variety of tortures that nothing else can equal. Then, in too many cases, comes a slow, wasting, prostrating fever, which nearly always necessitates a stretcher trip down to a hospital ship."

Naturally, David knew nothing about war, but, by the middle of the summer, he had become indignant over the wretched handling of the sick and wounded by the British hospital service.

"It's a disgrace, Mr. Ferguson," he broke out one day. "I've seen fifty men, sick and half-dying, waiting for medical attention in the open sun, because there were no hospital accommodations for them. What's England about?" And he repeated, "It's a positive disgrace and a rotten shame!"

"I'm afraid you're dead right," the transport expert replied, "although you're not half as much worked up about it as the army chiefs themselves. And as for the doctors,—why, the hospital service, such of it as there is here, is working about twenty hours a day."

"But why?" asked David. "I always under-

stood that it was in the medical end that modern war had come to be so up-to-date. It isn't here. What's the reason?"

Ferguson tilted his battered sun-helmet on the back of his head.

"I asked the Commanding Medical Officer about that one day," he said, "and he laid all the blame on India. You see, David, the first detachment of troops that was sent to Mesopotamia came from India, but it wasn't sent until after India had been drawn on for troops for Gallipoli, troops for Egypt and troops for German East Africa. Their Medical Service was all right. We got the leavings. Moreover, a few years ago, India started on a system of rigid economy, and while the supplies on hand were ample for all ordinary contingencies, no one ever expected that the whole Eastern world would burst into flame.

"Besides that, the original intention, as you know, was only to take Basra and hold the Shatt-el-Arab so as to make sure and control the oil-pipe line and to keep the Turks and Germans from getting control of the Persian Gulf. The Medical Service was all right for that, since all serious cases would be shipped back to hospitals in the hill country of India. But, with every Brit-

ish success, the big chiefs in England and India got eager for more successes and pushed the troops farther and farther up the river. It's a piece of dog-gone foolishness—'' this was an old grudge of Ferguson's—''for if they stretch the transport much farther it's going to be like a piece of elastic that's yanked too far. It'll snap, and—'' he paused significantly, ''it'll be the deuce an' all to mend!''

''It's too bad—'' David began, but the other continued.

''No one has any idea of this climate,'' he said. ''You can write about it all you like, and cuss all you know how, and the authorities can send it medical reports. That doesn't do any good. There isn't anybody who has enough gift of language to describe it. Take the worst bit of the battle-field in Europe, and this campaign here requires twice as much hospital attention as that—even without any fighting. War is war, of course, but in common humanity to both sides, a truce ought to be declared during the summer months. Killing thousands of men from heat and exhaustion doesn't do either side any good, so far as I can see. I call it murder!''

In spite of the execrable transport and hospital

situation, the British government was unable to resist the temptation of pushing on. As before, the principal reason for this urgency was the utter failure of the Gallipoli campaign and the weakness shown in England's half-hearted attempt to aid Serbia from the Salonica base. A third reason was Germany's counter-advance into Russia. These three things combined were calculated to make Turkey feel that the British were but a feeble foe and that victory would ultimately follow the German standards.

In Mesopotomia, on the other hand, with a pitifully small force, success had been continuous. The Turks had not had one victory to their credit, not even the smallest skirmish. Therefore, the British figured, it would be wise to press on to Bagdad in order to restore the waning prestige of England in the East. In any case, the move to Kut-el-Amara, generally known simply as Kut, was decided upon.

The original occupation of Kut happened in a very curious way. General Townshend, still supported by his "regatta" or flotilla of absurd river craft, though now somewhat strengthened by river steamers from the Indian rivers, pushed up from Amara. He stormed and took—not with-

out a sharp fight—the fortified post of Abu Rammaneh—and found the Turks strongly fortified half a mile below Kut. There the Turks settled down to battle and defended the place obstinately.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when the first gun was fired. The heat was intense. The men were exhausted, thirsty and pestered with sand-flies. Townshend, however, took comfort in the thought that the sun was just as hot for the Turks and the sand-flies equally annoying. He opened fire from the gunboats, while batteries, hastily set ashore, took up their share.

The attack looked more threatening than it was. The British general was painfully aware of the fact that he had no reserves to support him in case of a check, no means of covering a retreat. His lines of communication behind him had been thinned beyond the danger point. He did not dare to be too liberal with his ammunition, for Amara was 180 miles away. As the sun slowly began to approach the western horizon, the shelling died down.

In the meantime, a British column, which had been fighting on the outer flank and which had been marching since noon through desert country,

without any water save that which they had taken in their canteens, began to close in toward the river, to get in touch with the main body. Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, they found themselves closing in upon a large force of Turkish infantry.

Their commanding officer knew the military value of surprise and shock. Almost without hesitation, he wheeled his men full at the foe, with bayonets fixed. The Turks took cover in a dry, deep water-cut and opened a devastating fire. The British suffered horribly. The ranks were cut down by a third. Yet the remaining two-thirds never slackened speed and plunged down into the natural trench.

Convinced that such a daring attack could only imply that this column was but a first line and that a second line was following on the heels of it, the Turkish officers gave the order to retreat. Part of the Turks set off at a tangent, and ran into some British machine-gun companies who were getting ready for supper. The Tommies dropped their mugs and, jumping to the guns, started the murderous tattoo which means an array of mouths of belching death.

Darting off from this, the Turks came within

line of the few shells still dropping from the gunboats. Convinced that the British were round them and on every side, the retreat became a flight and then a rout. Late though it was, Townshend seized the opportunity, renewed the attack, pursued the Turks far into the night with relentless vigor, and an advance guard occupied Kut.

And David, still adding to his knowledge as a pilot, and now feeling himself almost a part of the advancing army, steered his camouflaged steamer up to Kut.

Appetite grows by feeding. The capture of Kut made the British Government hungry for more, and it called for an advance on Bagdad. General Townshend saw the danger and replied,

"Unless great risk is to be run, it is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary that the advance from Kut should be carried out methodically by two divisions or one army corps, exclusive of the garrisons of the important places of Nazariyeh, Ahwaz and Amara."

England urged the advantage of advance and promised troops.

Sir John Nixon, on receipt of news that another division was on its way from France, wired:

"Am strong enough to open road to Bagdad and with this intention propose to concentrate at Aziziyeh."

Townshend had already pushed cavalry to the latter place to protect his advance at Kut.

England then asked Nixon if he could capture Bagdad. The Commander-in-Chief replied that he would need at least an additional division and an extra regiment of cavalry. This was over and above the division from France. As Nixon saw, it is one thing to open the road to a powerfully garrisoned stronghold, and another to take it, especially with so many natural obstacles to overcome.

Then came the Gallipoli tragedy of Suvla Bay, when mismanagement and a reckless disregard of life cost the British tens of thousands of the most gallant soldiers that ever appeared on the field of battle. The General commanding was recalled in disgrace and the Gallipoli campaign, shortly afterwards, was abandoned. Suvla Bay had one striking effect on the Mesopotamian campaign, for the Secretary of State for India wired to the Viceroy:

"Owing to prospects in Gallipoli, we have great need of a striking success in the East."

The Viceroy replied that, in that case, it was

his judgment that the risk of the Bagdad campaign should be taken.

On October 31, the Secretary of State for India cabled:

"If Nixon is satisfied that the force he has is sufficient, he may march on Bagdad."

Sir John Nixon was by no means satisfied. He had asked for three divisions and had received less than one; he had demanded river transport and had not got it; he had insisted on hospital supplies, and these, too, were lacking.

General Townshend was still less satisfied. He wrote to the Viceroy:

"These troops of mine are tired and their tails are not up, but slightly down; the Mohammedans are not pleased at approaching the sacred precincts of Suliman Pak at Ctesiphon—the troops are not confident and have had enough; as it is now, the British soldier and the Sepoy, as the Roman soldier did under Belisarius, look over their shoulders and are fearful of the distance from the sea, and go down, in consequence, with every imaginable disease."

Every one on the ground knew the danger, but the political urgency was allowed to take precedence over the military risk.

From Kut to Bagdad it is 212 miles by river

though only 112 by land, a sufficient testimony to the crookedness of that malignant stream. Two hundred miles of added transport on a river of uncertain temper, over the very section of it which is most filled with shallows, was a terrific menace to the success of the campaign.

"If it wasn't just at the very minute of the lowest water in the year," Ferguson declared with disgust, "it wouldn't be so bad. Why can't those John Bull politicians wait a month, anyhow? The rains'll have come by then and the river'll have some water in it. A beetle wouldn't find room for his legs if he wanted to swim across it now!"

Which was somewhat of an exaggeration, though true that there were many places above Kut where two and a half feet was the maximum depth in the main channel.

Townshend had done the most that a good soldier could do. He had protested. He could not do more without refusing and being recalled for disobedience to orders. His only hope lay in such speed as could be managed. Since he had no reserves, no transport worthy of the name, no depth of water in the river even if he had the boats, and no supply base, he must get to Bagdad before the

Turkish reënforcements from Mosul reached the place.

David was pining to go along, for this would be the first advance in which he had not taken part, a minor part, indeed, but still a part. But, for this advance, even Ferguson was left behind.

"A pilot isn't any use in a puddle where a mud-turtle would strand," was Ferguson's aggrieved manner of stating to David the official order that they would not be needed to accompany the expedition.

After a weary march from Aziziyeh, Townshend's troops reached the first Turkish defenses at Laj, a short distance below Ctesiphon, where the old Parthian capital was built, twelve centuries ago, and where the Great Arch still stands, one of the most grimly isolated ruins of Western Asia. On November 21, the enemy position was attacked and the enemy was dislodged, the Turks falling back in good order on Ctesiphon.

The British halted. It had been a victory, but a costly one, too costly for safety with no reserves behind.

Townshend was only twenty-two miles from Bagdad.

"That evening," wrote an officer, who was wounded in the great battle next day, "there was a particularly red sunset, and for the first time we saw the Arch of Ctesiphon standing up against the glow. It was about seven miles away, and behind some of the positions which we knew to be occupied by the Turks. The whole country was lit up. What portent would the Romans have made of such a blood-red sky before a battle! Then darkness fell with the swiftness of the East and the great Arch was blotted out.

"At about eight o'clock we fell in for our night march across the desert to the dry water-channel, which was to be our post in the battle, almost the only form of natural cover in these surroundings. A November night in Mesopotamia is a chilly business, and khaki, however comfortable under the rays of the midday sun, is a poor protection against cold.

"We started in three long columns about 300 yards apart. It was a cloudless night and a bright moon lighted us on our way. We marched, of course, in silence—a silence that was only broken by the squeaking of cart or gun wheels and the occasional clink of a tin mug or a bayonet. . . . By four o'clock we had reached the dry wady

which was our destination. It was still dark when we arrived and I climbed on the top of the canal bank, about twenty feet high, to have a look at the country round. In the direction of the Turkish lines I could see six or seven big bonfires burning; what they were for, I never heard.

"The bank of the water-channel, while providing excellent cover from view, would not have protected us properly from shell-fire, so we started to dig ourselves in. By daybreak we were safely entrenched and could hear a good deal of gun and rifle fire going on to south of us. . . .

"At last, at nine o'clock, the order came for us to come out of our water-channel and form up.

"From the top of the bank we had a wonderful view of the whole position. To the southwest, and now no more than four miles away, was the Arch of Ctesiphon. Around it, the whole plain, as far as eye could see, was dotted with troops in various formations. To the north we could observe squadrons of Turkish cavalry.

"We moved off in artillery formation, but after about a quarter of an hour, a few bullets began to flick up the dust around us. So we extended in long line and in a few minutes the ball opened with the unwelcome attention of some Turkish

shrapnel. . . . On the plains were a number of still forms lying about, showing the tracks of the —— Brigade.

"Our objective, the Vital Point, was now distinctly visible, a sandy mound about thirty feet high, surrounded by a maze of wire entanglements. As we advanced to within about six hundred yards of the trenches it became clear that the firing line had reached its final fire position. A concentrated gun fire was turned on the mound, and a rain of shells fell on it, churning up the sand and giving it the appearance of a boiling cauldron. There was a rush and a roar of cheering and the Brigade bundled the Turks out of their trenches. . . .

"We advanced in short rushes. When we had got half-way to the enemy guns, we spotted a trench full of Turks. . . . So we fixed our bayonets and on arriving within 200 yards got the signal to charge. Luckily they had not put any wire out, and after a breathless run I found myself standing on the parapet. Inside the trench were a fair number of Turks . . . who surrendered. . . . We then pushed on towards the guns which had been abandoned by the enemy.

"No sooner had we reached them than the

Turks began to plaster the place with shrapnel from other guns, placed farther back. So unhealthy did the position become that we pushed on beyond our captures to upset the Turkish ranging. Our advance, however, threw our left flank in the air, so there was nothing for it but to halt.

"We lay down, of course, and opened fire on some Turks whom we could see running about in a desultory way to our front. In about a quarter of an hour we were greatly surprised to see them coming towards us over a slight rise only about eight hundred yards away.

"Evidently this was the counter-attack. A tremendous fire duel opened on both sides and must have lasted an hour and a half. Our rifles got so heated that the grease began to bubble out of the woodwork and the sights became too hot to touch. The enemy brought up two machine-guns and concentrated their attention on our exposed left flank, so that we had to pivot our line round half left to meet them.

"Things were getting serious, as our ammunition was running short. All our mules had been killed by shrapnel fire and all fresh supplies had to be brought up to us on men's shoulders, no

light job when the distance is considered. Moreover, our exposed left flank was in continual danger and it looked very much as if we would be cut off.

"It was a bitter moment when we were ordered to retire and to leave the guns we had captured; left, however, they had to be, as we had no means of taking them away.

"Having got back a bit we halted, formed a fresh line, and began again to advance. . . . We were approaching the Turkish guns once more. Again, however, the enemy brought up a heavy counter-attack against our flank, and we had no alternative but to go back 500 yards and re-form for a fresh advance. The time was about 3:30 P. M., and this was our third attempt to make good this part of the line. It was also, so far as I was concerned, the last. . . . I felt a sudden shock like an explosion. . . . My right arm had collapsed across my face. . . ." The writer had a horrible time getting back to a dressing-station, and his wounds took long to heal.

This officer's story of a portion of the battle of Ctesiphon was typical of the whole terrible conflict. The British and Indian troops, compelled to advance over a flat tract giving little or no cover,

in the approach to the first Turkish line, lost heavily. That, however, did not shake them, it added fuel to their fury. After a sharp struggle in the trenches with the bayonet, the Turks broke. The remnant bolted for their second line, a mile to the rear, the attackers close at their heels. The wreck of the flying Turks and the van of the attacking column entered the second line together. The second line also was broken and the attack swooped on to the batteries behind it. Eight of the Turkish guns speedily fell into the assailants' hands. It looked as though, after all, the battle would end in a victory.

Then the Turkish reënforcements came, in the nick of time for the enemy. Townshend now faced two to one, and his troops were utterly wearied. Against the newcomers, they could not hold the breach in the Turks' second line. The struggle was obstinate and bitter, but finally, weight of numbers told. Little by little the British were pushed out and they retired sullenly upon the Turks' first line. The night was spent in deepening and "turning round" the trench system against the enemy.

But Townshend was in a terrible trap. The number of wounded was appalling. The losses,

due to the battle being in the open, had been heavy. Shrapnel had been freely employed and the character of the wounds was ghastly. The chill of the November night and the burning glare of next morning's sun bred fever and delirium even in the slightly wounded.

The transport system, practically impossible because of the shallow water in the river, became utterly choked by the evacuation of the wounded. Supplies could not be brought up and the wounded taken care of at the same time. The losses even of Townshend's meager force had been 3,500 men.

And, even in Kut, there were but 900 beds, many of them already filled!

"Townshend's little army," says Dane,[1] "set out on its retreat from Ctesiphon in the night, on November 25. The Turks at once closed in. The retreating column set a pace which the Turkish troops found it hard to keep up.

"On scanty and insufficient food snatched in haste, with nothing more than brief intervals of sleep, unwashed, footsore, the retiring column tramped on, the boom of guns where the rear-

[1] "British Campaigns in the Near East, 1914–1918," by Edmund Dane (Hodder & Stoughton).

guard was in action perpetually in each man's ears.

"One toilsome day across the monotonous solitude followed another.

"Night fell and dog-tired men threw themselves down beside their bivouac fires to rise almost more weary than before. But marvelously few fell out.

"The camp fires flickered upon faces set and grimy, but they were those of men who, knowing that they had done great deeds of arms, were confident of themselves, and, despite adversity, confident in their commander."

In the retreat, moreover, the flotilla, loaded down with wounded, became entangled in the shallows of the river. Light gunboats were sent up to try and tow the barges, but the gunboats stranded. The *Firefly* was disabled by a shell. The *Comet* grounded and had to be abandoned.

The retreating column marched on. Halts had to be lengthened, stages shortened. The men staggered rather than walked. No one spoke to his neighbor. The shortened panting breaths rose higher than the clink of accouterments. Almost comatose with exhaustion, the men re-

sponded jerkily, like automata, to orders of command. At length, on the eighth day, the slender minaret of the solitary mosque of Kut rose above the distant horizon.

David, sitting down to breakfast on the 2nd of December, heard, borne on the north wind, a distant,

"Boom! Boom! Boom!"

Guns!

All the tales and burdens of disaster which had come down on the few barges which had drifted down, bearing wounded, found voice in the distant menace. It needed no imagination to picture what a retreat that must have been for sixty miles, if still pressed with a mile or two of Kut.

"Boom!"

David ran out, his breakfast all untasted. Then, out of the dusty distance he saw a body of men retreating. A mounted officer galloped on in advance, stammering the woeful tidings and begging that food might be ready.

Food!

Every one in Kut set out what victuals were ready. The mess kitchens were driven to utmost speed, and as the men rolled in, many too tired to reach their allotted places, they swallowed a

morsel of meat or a plate of soup and sank down on the ground in stuporous sleep.

The Turk came closer, closer. To north, to west, to east, and finally to south, the encircling ring gripped nearer and nearer.

The desert ways were shut.

Along the marshes there was left no way.

The river rolled by silently, with barriers up stream and down, lit by rows of camp-fires, where unsleeping Turkish sentries watched.

Caught! Trapped! Besieged!

The terrific ordeal of Kut-el-Amara had begun and David was in the midst of it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAWN OF REVENGE

So began the siege of Kut, practically the only siege of the Great War.

So soon as the men recovered from their grinding fatigue, measures were taken for the defense of Kut. The little town of 5,000 inhabitants consisted of an extended water-front, half a mile in length. At right angles to the river were a series of streets, parallel connecting streets being few and far between.

There were only two large buildings, the Turkish "Serai" with its roomy barrack square, headquarters officers and flagstaff, and the mosque with lofty minaret, topped by its turquoise dome. There were two bazaars, both covered in by matting spread over wooded rafters, shady arcades in summer, though full of a thousand smells and a-reek from perspiration, but in winter, dirty, muddy, squalid, and foul.

The town contained about twenty well-built two-

Australian Official Photo.

FROM RAILHEAD TO FIGHTING LINE.

The camel transports had to travel over naked sand, absolutely without cover, often under direct shell-fire.

story brick houses, all built four-square around an inner court, upon which opened rooms with balconies, and in one corner the winding stairway to the roof. In the middle of each courtyard was the drain and cesspool. All the rooms, therefore, faced the smell. The poorer houses were but mud hovels, several built around a single courtyard enclosed by an encircling wall. In the center was the cesspool for all the hovels with a mud oven beside it, common to the community.

Just beyond the streets, but still within the horseshoe curve of the river, was Kut's rubbish heap, covered with refuse and dead and living dogs all mixed up. Beyond this was the graveyard. Beyond this, again, came the brick kilns, and these were used as the inner line of defense by the British. The outer line was a deep trench system, well protected by barbed wire, across the neck of the bend, or the points of the horseshoe.

On December 9 the Turks made a determined attack on Kut, attacking the river front rather than the land defenses. A vigorous rush was made to carry the bridge of boats which spanned the river from Kut to the little mud village of Woolpress, across the stream. The attempt was

gallantly beaten off, but seeing that it was certain to be renewed and that the post at the Woolpress end had been driven in, Townshend decided to blow the shore attachments of the structure at the farther end, so that the bridge might be swung by the current to the Kut side of the river. It was urgent to prevent the enemy seizing the boats and other material.

Two British officers volunteered. It would have been easy to cross the bridge on foot, but, even in the dark of night, the Turkish sentries were watching closely. Therefore the river had to be swum, no easy matter, for the river is 250 yards wide at this point and the current was over four miles an hour. There could be no landing on the other side, for every foot was occupied by the Turks. The two officers must stay in the water until the charge of explosives was laid and then fire it.

David was on the rough wharf, near the bridge, watching, for Ferguson had told him of the venture. It was an exciting wait, after the two men had slipped into the water. Ten good minutes passed. Then the dark was split apart with a vivid flash, followed by a sullen roar, and in the moment of flash the bridge could be seen to heave.

Then darkness came again, but not for more than half a minute, when, from the other side of the bank, first a score and then a hundred little spurts of flame, followed by a sharp crackling, told that the Turks were firing blindly in all directions in the hope of hitting the daring heroes. David ducked behind a trench, glad that there was one handy. The two officers, both of whom were accomplished swimmers, had swum most of the way back under water, just coming up for air. Both returned safely. The bridge swung back to the Kut side, free from enemy attack.

Angered by the success of this exploit, on the next day the Turks set themselves desperately to take the town. All day long they strove. Though beaten back with heavy loss, they made no less than five desperate assaults.

It was well that General Townshend had set every man who could be spared to make trenches and dug-outs. Also, at that time, there had been no question of saving ammunition, and a week of good feeding had put back heart into the men. The strength of a trench does not lie in the sand-bags only, but, especially when there is a charge, its strength lies in the spirit of the men who hold it. The Turks had guns, but they did not have

the heavy guns of the western front. Shelling did not destroy the trenches, and charges were too costly. The Turkish assaults slackened.

"Christmas approached," says Dane, "and outside headquarters nothing more definite was to be gleaned than rumors. The enemy's bursts of fire in his opinion evidently had not had the desired effect of causing the besieged to waste their ammunition. Acting on the counsel of their General, they 'husbanded it like gold.' Realizing that the blockade was likely to be prolonged; anxious to push in force down the river before the British could finally and firmly establish their footing in the country, and fearing, that, if held, Kut would finally be relieved, the enemy, having brought up another division of reënforcements, once more essayed a storming enterprise.

"It was preceded on December 23 by a great bombardment. Every gun of the Turkish forces on both sides of the river was put into action. This general shelling, of course, was intended to mask the point of the attack on December 24, which it was known would be the sequel. The point of attack proved to be the fort (an old Turkish fort, which the British had included in their line of defense). By a concentration of

guns upon it, the bastion had been breached, and though to a certain extent the breach had been offset by wiring in, the enemy threw forward what he no doubt judged to be an overwhelming column of some 6,000 infantry.

"They pressed onward in the face of a most withering fire, and, although the losses were most severe, and hundreds perished upon the wire, the others swarmed through the breach and into the bastion, carried by the impetus of numbers.

"The British batteries, however, were in turn focussed on the work and its mud walls crumbled into ruins. In the gap beyond it was found that the defenders had built up an inner breastwork.

"The Turks tried to rush it. They tried again and again. Time and again it came to a struggle at close quarters, only, however, yet again to prove that the Turk was no match for the veterans of the Indian Army with the bayonet.

"Meanwhile, efforts had been made to scale the walls of the main fort, men climbing on each other's shoulders, or using short ladders. Nowhere could a footing be established.

"In the midst of this deadly conflict the guns on both sides were busy and squalls of shrapnel lashed assailants and defenders alike.

"The defense, which was magnificent, finally triumphed. So magnificent was it, indeed, and so severe this time had been the lesson that this was the last endeavor to take Kut by assault. In and around the ruins of the bastion and the walls of the main fort, the enemy's dead lay everywhere. The Turkish losses in this, for them a disastrous affair, were some 2,000 men."

David had been anxious to take part in the battle and on one occasion, indeed, had snatched up a rifle from a soldier who was staggering back through the city to a dressing-station. Ferguson, however, saw this action and called him back with a stentorian hail.

"You'd be more nuisance than you're worth," he said emphatically. "Modern war is a matter of discipline, not of individual action. If you're pining to do something, get down to the base hospital, and help the orderlies. The work will be mucky and nasty, but it's the most useful thing you can do."

David's gorge rather rose at the idea. It was the heroic end of fighting as a gallant defender that had appealed to him. However, he had let himself in for it, and there was no way out. Very soberly he made his way to the base hospital

and asked a much overworked doctor if he could help.

"Rather!" was the prompt reply. "Don't know anything about surgery, I suppose?" he added. He had not even looked up from his work to see who was addressing him.

"No, Doctor," said the boy.

"Too bad. Well—" he looked up. "But you're just a youngster! No place for you. Better go home."

"But I want to help! Isn't there anything I can do, orderly work or such?"

"Oh, if you're really willing to work!" The doctor looked round. "Suppose you just wash these wounded as they come in, and lay pieces of linen over the places to keep the flies out. That'll save me time."

Thus David began his work as a hospital attendant. Though clumsy he was willing, and during the rush of the first few days he made himself useful to the medical side. He hated it, at the beginning, but Ferguson kept him at it. Later he grew to like the work. During the rainy months of December and January, there were few waking hours when he was not at some work in the hospital. It was all highly irregular, but the medical

service was terribly short-handed, and David was of value with the Arab patients, not only by reason of his knowledge of the tongue, but also because his childhood experience had taught him somewhat of Arab character.

Meanwhile, Sir John Nixon resigned as Commander-in-Chief and Sir Percy Lake succeeded him. Nixon was blamed for the Kut failure, though it was not his fault. It was first, last and all the time, a question of transport.

"If they'd sent half the men and twice the steamers," Ferguson was apt to declare, "I'd have taken them into Bagdad last summer."

Which was absolutely true.

General Aylmer came with Sir Percy Lake in command of the troops, two more divisions being sent as reënforcements, these being Indian troops sent from the north of France because they were unable to endure the wet and chilling winters of that latitude, and from Gallipoli by reason of the abandonment of that futile and costly operation.

Knowing how urgent was the need at Kut, General Aylmer set out at once with a column hastily gotten together, and, as always, with insufficient transport. He reached as far as Ali-el-Gharbi on Christmas Day, a point only forty miles below

Kut. The wireless operator of the garrison at Kut reported the arrival of a message saying that the advance of the Relief Force from that point would be made on January 6. This was cheering news, and men in the Kut garrison began to talk cheerfully again about joining in the occupation of Bagdad.

But Khalil Pasha, the Turkish Commander, was not the sort of man to await a Relief Force without making preparation. Aware of the danger of leaving his rear open to a sortie from the Kut garrison, he established his main lines ten miles down stream. On the eastern side, at a point where an impassable marsh comes close to the river, he entrenched a deep double system of eight earthworks, at Hanna and Sanna-i-yat respectively. On the western side of the river, from a point five miles inland, known as the Dujalah Redoubt, he ran three powerful blockade lines, to Beit-Aiessa, Es Sinn and Megasisti Fort respectively. Then, to guard against a turning by flank, he ran another blockade line far away to where the Shatt-el-Hai, an ancient Babylonian canal, joins the Tigris and the Euphrates. The defenses were modern, complete, and well held by artillery.

On January 6, according to schedule, Aylmer advanced from Ali-el-Gharbi and attacked an advance force of the Turks at Sheik Saad, twenty miles up stream. The enemy was defeated with heavy loss, but the British loss was not small. Transport again interfered with the disposition of the wounded. The enemy fell back upon a wady three miles away, and defended this with considerable vigor. It was a naturally strong place, but Aylmer's column forced its way through, though again with considerable casualties.

In all these British operations, the fighting value of the enemy had been underestimated. Gallipoli should have taught England the mettle of the Turks, but the lesson was ignored. General Aylmer had indeed thrown Khalil Pasha back to his main defense line, the outer girdle at Hanna, but it had cost him 6,000 men.

Moreover, the winter rains had set in, and the marshes on either side of the river, passable in places in October, had become shallow lakes. The universal hub-deep dust of October, a dust which covers up the palm-groves so that they are no longer green, a dust which fills the mouth as though one were continually munching a gritty

tooth-paste, which gets into the corners of the eyes and inflames them, causing temporary blindness, which works into the flesh so that the place where belt or collar touches becomes raw, all this dust, the winter rains turned into a slippery, glutinous mud that clung to everything it touched. Mesopotamian mud in December and January is a sticky mire, in which even artillery bullocks sink and the guns can only be moved with excessive difficulty.

And there was no river transport.

Owing to the fact that the incoming troops would know little about the shoals and currents of the river, Ferguson had grown too restless to stay in Kut, he wanted to help the Relieving Column. He had asked Townshend for permission to try to make the trip down to Sheik Saad, when it was known that Aylmer had reached so far. Townshend had declined. The next morning Ferguson had disappeared.

Then came silence. He never reached Sheik Saad.

David was now tenfold more alone, but he was kept busy by the medical service.

The Relief Column was now in a difficult position. With heavy losses, shortage of munitions,

lack of supplies and defective transport, General Aylmer had either to wait where he was for Sir Percy Lake to try to send up supplies and reenforcements—not knowing when they would get there—or else he must push on with tired men and scant munitions to try to take a powerful Turkish position.

One thing outweighed all others. Aylmer had been sent forward to relieve Kut. He could not afford to fall back without at least one desperate attempt to reach the beleaguered city. Moreover, if he fell back, there was a grave danger that the Turks would repeat the move they had made at Ctesiphon, and perhaps he himself would be trapped wherever he tried to make a stand.

On January 21 Aylmer attacked Hanna, which was a trench system consisting of five separated defenses situated between a flooded swamp and the river, all these trenches being connected with saps. The ground was soft, and, had the British been able to afford a heavy artillery preparation, enough to blow up the trenches, the assault might have been successful.

Owing to lack of transport, there was little food for the guns. The men had to make a frontal attack on almost uninjured trenches. It was

brilliant, it was daring, it was heroic, it was desperate. But not even undaunted courage can overcome weight of numbers and advantage of position. The attack on Hanna failed. The British and Indian losses were 2,741 men on that one day. The troops had to be withdrawn.

In Kut, the besieged had heard clearly the sound of the rescuers' guns. But, that night, the pitiless wireless told the truth.

Another British disaster!

In Kut the food allowed to each man had already been cut by one-third. On the news of the Hanna repulse, it was cut to one-half. Hunger began to stare the besieged in the face.

There was no fuel in Kut. Doors, balconies, stairs, tables, chairs, everything which would burn was drawn on, but sparingly, not for heating though the nights were chill, the streets were mucky rivers and the skies overhead rained pitilessly, but for the mess-kitchens. Some coal-dust and sand found in an abandoned yard was mixed with crude oil. Then poles and matting which covered the bazaar streets was torn down and burned.

Flour was a prime difficulty. In response to frequent appeals from Townshend, the British

aviators succeeded in flying over and dropping into the city two millstones, and a mill was improvised by the engineers. Bread was now made of one-third flour, one-third barley meal and one-third bean-dust.

By this time, General von der Goltz had reached Bagdad and taken up headquarters there, a fact which the garrison at Kut soon found out by the increased activity in the bombardment. Aëroplanes came over daily and dropped bombs, across the river trench mortars were erected and threw "windy-Lizzies," high mud walls were erected whence snipers fired all day long at anything or anybody seen passing in the streets of Kut.

The Indian troops, being Mohammedans, would not eat the freshly killed meat of the artillery bullocks, which now were being sacrificed. There were no fresh vegetables, no lime juice. Scurvy broke out in the camp. A special cablegram was sent for and received from the religious leaders in India informing the Mohammedan troops that there was no law of their Faith against the eating of horseflesh, and the horses were sacrificed. Even so, few of the Indians were willing to eat meat, and the scurvy spread.

Without fuel, during the period of the rains

when the trenches were half filled with water, pneumonia became common. Little by little the supply of barley-meal diminished, and the bread became a nauseous compound. Towards the last, no one ever asked what went on in the baking kitchens. It was known, however, that one mess was eating a considerable portion of mud mixed with the bread, to keep the other ingredients from causing too violent griping pains inside.

There was but one horror they were spared. A large consignment of poison gas shells arrived at the front from Germany and Von der Goltz rubbed his hands in delight. He could bury Kut in the foul fumes and not a soul would emerge alive.

To his utter amazement Khalil Pasha refused not only to use the bombs, but to allow his men to continue the campaign if the Germans used them.

"It is sufficiently a disgrace to the true believer to be compelled to ally himself with infidels," declared the Turkish nobleman—this to Von der Goltz's face—"but we will not ally ourselves with the children of Jân (devils). The first gas-shell that is fired will be a signal for me to be compelled to express regret that your duties require your return to Germany."

This galled Von der Goltz, but the Turkish

Alliance was too important for the German commander to risk it by an imprudent reply.

On March 8, Aylmer's column having been reenforced, it marched again against Es Sinn. The sound of the rescuers' guns was heard once more in Kut. Over three months had passed. The garrison was on its last legs. It knew how much the second attempt at relief meant. It felt how hopeless would be the situation in case of a reverse.

This time, Aylmer attacked both on the Es Sinn side and at Dujailah. The river was still rising, a record flood. The Turks had fortified every place that stuck out above the muddy and swirling water. The main point was the Dujailah redoubt, for the British Commander felt that if he could carry this, he could flank the Turkish position, and, even if he did not succeed in ousting him, he could, at all events, force an advance storming party into Kut with provisions.

The plan of attack was excellent, provided that it could have been carried out. A force of 20,000 men were to strike across country to the Es Sinn line, arriving just before daybreak. A force of 15,000 men, with the Cavalry Brigade, was sent by a detour around the marsh—or through it—to

reach the redoubt at daybreak. But the men were too tired, and the going was too heavy. Endurance has its limits. The Es Sinn force did not arrive until long after daylight, the force intended to attack the redoubt not until two and a half hours later. The men were ready to drop from fatigue when the order was given to charge. None the less they fought and fought well. At the redoubt, even, a foothold was gained.

Hope sprung high in the British ranks. On nearly every occasion before, once the British had actually breached a line and started with the bayonet, the Turks had turned, and then a few minutes of vigorous work had turned the retreat into a rout. But, at the redoubt, the artillery and machine-gun companies were officered by Germans, who held the men close to their work.

"Are they retreating?" was the agonized query sent up to the scouting aëroplanes.

"No sign of retreat!" came back the disturbing answer.

Had there been a suitable camping-ground and drinkable water, perhaps a second day's assault might have won the redoubt, and turned the Turkish line. But there was none and the men were done. There is a point of exhaustion and loss be-

yond which the soul of an army cracks. More had been asked than human endeavor could attain. The men were done. Aylmer ordered a retreat.

Yet another disaster was added to British military history in Mesopotamia.

It was followed a few hours later by the visit to Kut of a Turkish officer under a white flag of truce, expressing a willingness to receive terms of surrender. Through his interpreter he was lavish in praise of the gallantry of the garrison. Townshend was equally courteous, but declined.

The following day the British Commander issued one of his famous communiqués. It read in part:

"As on a former occasion, I take the troops of all ranks into my confidence again. . . .

"We have now stood a three months' siege in a manner which has called upon you the praise of our beloved King and our fellow-countrymen in England, Scotland, Ireland and India, and all this after your brilliant battles of Kut-el-Amara and Ctesiphon and your retirement to Kut, all of which feats of arms are now famous. Since 5th December, 1915, you have spent three months of cruel uncertainty, and to all men and all people, uncertainty is intolerable. As I say, on the top of all this, comes the second failure to relieve us.

"And I ask you also to give a little sympathy to me who have commanded you in these battles referred to, and who, having come to you as

a stranger, now love my command with a depth of feeling I have never known in my heart before. . . .

"I am speaking to you as I did before, straight from the heart, and, as I say, I ask your sympathy for my feelings, having promised you relief on certain dates on the promise of those ordered to relieve us. Not their fault, no doubt. Do not think I blame them; they are giving their lives freely and deserve our gratitude and admiration.

"But I want you to help me again, as before. I have asked General Aylmer for the next attempt to bring down such numbers as will break down all resistance and leave no doubt as to the issue.

"In order, then, to hold out, I am killing a large number of horses, so as to reduce the quantity of grain eaten every day, and I have had to reduce your ration. It is necessary to do this in order to keep our flag flying. I am determined to hold out, and I know you are with me, heart and soul."

Not only the horses went. All the cats and dogs disappeared. With the beginning of April, the rains ceased and grass and weeds began to grow. Volunteer parties went out at night to cut anything green, grass, herbs, weeds. The mess was boiled. Noisome and bitter, it had one good effect, it stopped the scurvy. Flocks of starlings arrived and crack shots helped to fill the pots. A few starlings for an army!

On April 4, the roar of guns was heard again.

The third attempt at relief had begun. Sir Stanley Maude had arrived with a division from Egypt. The first attack was a brilliant success. The British took both sides of the enemy's position. The Turks attempted a midnight stand and were whipped severely. A reënforcing British division came up and carried on the fight next morning. It looked as though Kut would be reached.

But a crest of water, evidently from some heavy rainstorm in the distant hills, suddenly raised the Tigris half a foot and swamped the trenches. The guns could not be moved. There followed two days' delay, which the Turks used to full advantage.

Townshend had already announced that April 15 was the latest date to which food could be made to hold out. On learning that the Relief Force was so near, though compelled to dig in, he wirelessed that he would try to hold out a week longer. The rations were cut down to five ounces of meal daily to a man.

Said the communiqué:

"On 26th January I told you that our duty was plain and simple: it was to stand here and hold up the Turkish advance on the Tigris, working heart and soul together, and I expressed the hope that we would make this defense to be remem-

bered in history as a glorious one, and I asked you to remember in this connection the defense of Plevna, which was longer even than that of Ladysmith.

"Well, you have nobly carried out your mission; you have nobly answered the trust and appeal I put to you. The whole British Empire, let me tell you, is ringing now with our defense of Kut. You will all be proud to say, one day, 'I was one of the garrison at Kut!' And as for Plevna and Ladysmith, we have outlasted them also. Whatever happens now, we have all done our duty."

With the arrival of more aëroplanes came the attempt to reprovision Kut by dropping sacks of flour. It was moderately successful. Had the machines been available, and had the provisioning been begun weeks earlier, Kut might have held out. But, ever and always, it was expected that the Relief Force would break through. Yet the Turkish cordon was unbreakable.

At last April 21 came, the day that Townshend had said was the limit of endurance. By the aid of a few sacks of flour dropped by aëroplanes he announced that he could hold out two or possibly three days longer.

The last attempt was to be made by the Navy. To run the Turkish blockade was an apparently impossible task. It could not be done at night

for the current was too tricky. By day, the banks were lined with guns heavier than anything a river gunboat could carry.

Yet a Navy crew, Lieutenant-Commander Cowley in command and Lieutenant Firman as engineer, started on the *Julnar,* the lightest draught and fastest boat in the transport. With her boilers at top pressure she darted into the swirls of the swollen river.

The Turks were not to be caught napping. The guns of the forts and of the banks roared out in a crescendo of fury. The water around the *Julnar* boiled with the shells. The captain fell at the wheel, dead in a pool of his own blood. The engineer died an instant later. Raked by shrapnel, pierced by shell, afire and racing blindly, the *Julnar* plunged into a mudbank and stuck, her 270 tons of supplies on board within easy sight of the garrison at Kut, but as out of reach as though they were a thousand miles away.

On April 25 was begun the last half of the emergency ration and two days later, General Townshend, with a heavy heart went out to treat with Khalil Pasha, the Turkish Commander. He had hoped for favorable terms, but Khalil Pasha, while courteous, was adamant. He had offered to

receive terms of surrender before and Townshend had refused. He would accept nothing now but unconditional surrender.

So, after 147 days, the longest and most bitter siege in modern history, the British flag was hauled down and the Turkish standard raised in its place. Townshend and all the gallant defenders went into captivity.

Two hours after the Turks entered Kut, there sauntered into the hospital, where David was working, a familiar figure. The boy rubbed his eyes.

"Ferguson!" he cried. "I thought you were dead!"

The American was as imperturbable as ever.

"Very much alive, my lad," he replied.

"But how did you get here?"

"You mean in Kut? I came in with the Turks. Or do you mean in the hospital? I came here because one of our prisoners told me that he'd seen you working in a hospital. That's how I knew that you were safe."

"And what have you been doing all these long months?" queried the boy.

"Improving my knowledge of Turkish, mainly," the American replied, with a queer smile.

"Prisoner?"

"In a way. Pleasantly enough, though. When the Germans found that I was an American, they didn't quite know what to do. I'd been helping the English, they knew that, but I told them I was being paid for it, which was true. So they asked me to act as a pilot for them. I said I was quite willing, but I didn't know anything about the river above Kut."

"But you do!" protested David, who had a deep disdain for anything untrue.

"Of course, but I had to answer something. didn't I? And as long as the Turks didn't have control of the river below Kut, I was able to show willingness without ever having to carry it out. They put me on parole not to leave the camp and not to send any messages. That's why I wasn't able to let you know that I was here, though it would have been easy enough for one of the German aviators to have dropped a letter for me into Kut."

"And you're here, then, still on parole?"

"Still," the American nodded. "I'm pretty good friends with Khalil Pasha, too. Fine chap. Not a bit like a Turk. Quick, alert, progressive and all that, and a mighty good soldier, too. I've

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

KUT-EL-AMARA, WHERE THE BRITISH FLAG WAS HAULED DOWN.

Place of the famous siege, where Turks, Kurds, and Arabs compelled surrender, after a beleaguer of 147 days.

talked to him about you. It'll be all right. They'll put you on parole, too.

"The only thing you'll have to be careful about is that you cut all your friends among the British. If they see you talking to any of them, they'll be suspicious. But it's a lot easier to learn to hold your tongue than to go into a Turkish prison camp. I know. I've seen them!

"The Turks themselves aren't so bad, but the Germans have a way of suggesting ugly things that a Turk wouldn't think of, but which he carries out with delight. No, my boy, keep out of a Turkish prison camp, if you can."

"I surely will," the boy agreed, "though it looks as though keeping me out of it were going to be your job."

"I'll fix it all right," said Ferguson. "Be on the job here, bright and early to-morrow, and make it a point to be busy over some of the Turkish wounded patients you have here, not the English. Tip off the English doctor. Then, when the Chief Medical Officer of the Turkish Staff comes through here, to take control of affairs from the British medical officers, I'll come with him and point you out. If we can arrange the thing smoothly, you can go along quietly with this

work. Bit by bit, if you can get the Turkish doctors to trust you, they'll make you useful with English patients, where your knowledge of the language will help."

The following morning brought about the events exactly in the way that Ferguson had stated. Sauntering through the wards in the wake of the Turkish Chief Medical Officer, the American pointed out the lad. The Turk ran a keen eye over him and motioned him forward.

"Do you speak Turkish?" he asked, in that language.

"A little," David answered, "but I speak Arabic better."

The doctor turned the conversation into that tongue. He hurled a dozen questions at the boy, and David found himself answering in a way that showed he had picked up a great deal of rough military nursing during his three months in hospital service.

"You will give your parole, as an American, that you will not try to escape, that you will not assist any one who is trying to escape and that you will not speak about military matters to any Turkish, Arab or British soldier?" the newcomer asked curtly.

"Yes," answered David quietly, "I promise and give my parole."

"We have been able to trust your friend," commented the Turkish doctor; "I hope we shall find that we have not been unwise in trusting you."

And he continued his rounds.

The change of control made little difference to David's position, except that it threw more responsibility on him. The Turkish doctors, contrary to the boy's expectations, were well-trained and absolutely modern. They did not care to work hard, however, and were largely indifferent to the results of their treatment. They knew what to do, and did it. But there was none of that desperate struggle against death for a patient's life, none of that battle to "pull a man through" to which the boy had grown accustomed during the past three months. If a man died after he had received the treatment which ought to cure him, it was the will of Allah, and that was all.

Owing to his parole, David spoke on the questions of the war with no one but Ferguson, with whom he was living in the same little house as before, though it was a wrecked remnant of the house, with every splinter of glass out of the

windows, one corner chopped off by a shell and bullet-marks everywhere.

"When do you suppose the British will come up again and take Kut?" asked David.

"Not for a long time," answered Ferguson, shaking his head. "At least, I reckon not. If the British have any sense, they'll finally begin where they ought to have begun at first."

"You mean—transport?" queried the boy.

Ferguson nodded.

"I told 'em the first time they came," he said, alluding to the British Expeditionary Force, "that they'd better stay at Basra till they got boats, not a few boats, but a lot. I told 'em that boats wouldn't be any good till they got wharves. There's just one way to win Mesopotamia. That's by river, but by a river tamed and controlled. Once get the river so that the Navy can use it, and so that the Army transport service can do its work, and the soldiers won't have any trouble."

Fortunately for final British success, the second Commander-in-Chief, Sir Percy Lake, had seen this. General Lake's talents lay rather in the line of organization and detail than in military strategy. He had given Generals Aylmer and

Gorringe a free hand in the efforts to relieve Kut, but he himself had turned his attention mainly to making Basra a permanent military force and base. Wharves of permanent character had been built. Railways had been laid down in all important directions. Reservoirs and dams had been constructed to check and control the spring floods on the Shatt-el-Arab. Lake had secured experienced civil engineers. His staff organization at Basra was superb. During the spring, while Aylmer was trying to reach Kut and during the summer after Kut had fallen, Basra was turned into a modern river port and the transport question was reorganized.

In August the chief command was transferred to Sir Stanley Maude, who had shown himself a commander of genius. The change was made just at the right time. Lake's work was done. Maude undertook the same thorough reorganization of the army, which his predecessor had given to Basra and the system of supply. It was Maude who realized the need of a much stronger cavalry end. He built up a complete Veterinary and Remounts service. It was Maude also who, in a somewhat abrupt note, declared that "British feeling could not condone an inadequate hospital

service on a difficult and unhealthy battle-front."

The three and a half months that elapsed after Maude took command until the time that he "went north," to use a phrase that became famous in Mesopotamia, was a period of incessant activity. The general was determined that the transport mismanagement should not continue. Though few people knew it, at the very moment that Aylmer was driving forward with all his power to relieve Kut, and hampered by lack of reënforcements, there were 12,000 fresh troops at Basra, more than enough to have turned the scale, who could not be got up to their comrades because of transport conditions.

When Maude "went north," he was prepared to march indefinitely. He could have gone to Constantinople, if need be. Supplies were ample, munitions were abundant, river steamers plentiful, and there were baggage and draught animals enough to keep pace with the river transport all along the line. The worst places on the roads had been bridged, swampy places drained. The mosquito pest had been abolished by drainage and sanitation at the main camps. The sand-fly was the only unconquered pest.

On the other hand, in the six months between

the fall of Kut and the beginning of Maude's advance, the Germans and Turks had made of the Es Sinn defenses a barrier which they believed to be as impregnable as Gallipoli. A maze of trenches and breastworks fifteen miles deep had been constructed, and to the rear of this maze were two other almost equally formidable positions. Heavy artillery had been floated down on rafts to dominate the whole. From impassable marsh on the one hand to impassable desert on the other, there was not an unprotected inch. Yet, though the position seemed so secure, the German general did not trust to the defenses alone, but had a heavy army in position, with tremendous reënforcements gathered at Bagdad.

To take such a strong position meant terrific fighting, but Maude saw that there was one strategical advantage, at least. Since the entire valley was occupied by defenses, an attacking force could not be flanked or surrounded. Persistent frontal hammering, if savage enough and heavy enough, must result in the taking of those defenses one by one. It meant heavy loss of life, it meant night and day bombardment, it meant huge hospital accommodations and perfect liaison in every branch. Maude had the men, he had the

guns, he had the munition, he had made the liaison.

The series of battles began on December 13, 1916. It took five days of absolutely continuous fighting to break through one end of the outer defenses. Had the attacking column been an isolated force, like that of Townshend, or of Aylmer, another British disaster would have been recorded. But Maude was ready for this very contingency. He threw another column of fresh and unwearied men at the opposite end of the defenses, this attack being accomplished by a terrific bombardment. The Turkish commander at once shifted his troops to meet this attack, but the bombardment went on and on and on. So heavy was the shell-fire that the defenses began to crumble and a breach was made. It looked like the ideal moment for an attack.

But to the astonishment of the Turks, the breach was left unused and a triple attack was made at the other end of the line. The outer column of this attack had marched through an absolutely waterless country and it pinched in back of the outer fort. The Turks believed that no troops could maneuver through such country, but Maude's extraordinary land transport system

and his heavy cavalry achieved the almost impossible, and the western end crumpled. This was by no means a decisive defeat, for the Turks consolidated, but it enabled the British to dig in higher up the river, and to annoy the Turks at a point between their first and second main lines of defense.

Day after day, night after night, for long weeks, Turks and British fought hand to hand. The Indian troops were like tigers. The Turks would not weaken. The loss of life on both sides was terrible. But, day after day, here a trench and there a breastwork fell into British hands, and what was once gained was not lost afterwards. By February 3, after sixty-four days of continuous effort and unceasing combat—only those who know modern war can imagine what the transport service was called upon to do to sustain a huge army during such a protracted battle—the main outer salient was driven in. By the 10th, the Turks were driven back to the second series of defenses, around Kut. On the 13th, the Liquorice Factory—a prominent defense of the British garrison when it was in Kut—had been taken. On the 15th and 16th the assault rose to unparalleled ferocity. The British and Indians crept on. To

hold his second position, the Turkish commander moved men up from the third.

Maude, receiving this report from his airmen, ordered a redoubled bombardment on the front and sent a heavy force to flank the third line, through the crumpled western end. There was a bitter fight, but the engineers succeeded in throwing a pontoon bridge across, and the infantry of one division passed over. The Turks were now taken in the rear.

As they struck, with a precision timed to a second, the assault was made in front. For two hours the Turks held stubbornly and then aëroplane reconnoissances showed that the rear was giving way.

A cry rang through the British ranks,

"The last push, men!"

Like a great tidal wave the British and Indians swept on and through, and, as they broke, the gunboats, which had been active in the bombardment night and day, stormed through to Kut.

Much of this battle David had seen from a distance, but not all. Realizing toward the end of February that the British would probably get through, Ferguson and David decided to make themselves scarce. The wily American had long

ago prepared for the complications which might follow a change of masters in Kut by appropriating one of the bomb-proof shelters which had been built by the British during the siege. This he had stored with ample provision of food and water in hermetically sealed bottles.

On the evening of February 24, looking out cautiously from the bomb-proof, the two fugitives saw British soldiers in khaki marching through the streets. Scant time was lost in leaving the shelter.

Master of the situation as always, Ferguson hunted up one of the officers he had known at Basra, and reëstablished friendly communications. No one could have been more welcome, for while the gunboats were navigating the river admirably, by the aid of the lead, and had already charted and buoyed the stream below Kut, a Tigris pilot was always useful, especially for the unknown upper stretch of the river, and David's services were of almost equal value in spite of his youth and inexperience.

"We have over five hundred craft, of one kind and another, on the river now," declared one of the transport officers, chatting the situation over with Ferguson and his boy assistant.

"How on earth did you do it?" asked the American.

"We did it!" the other answered grimly.

He pointed through a hole in the wall—few buildings were left sufficiently whole in Kut to possess a window—to a flat-bottomed, high-funneled, double-decked, paddle-wheel craft, churning up stream with a barge in tow.

"That's a Thames penny steamer!" he said.

"But how in the world did she get here?" asked Ferguson.

"Under her own steam!" was the answer.

Both men fell silent. Even the American looked with awe at the craft.

"Bay of Biscay, Mediterranean, Suez, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf!" he muttered. "It isn't possible."

"It wasn't possible," the officer answered, "but it was done. Eleven started, but only five reached here."

"The others?"

"Their crews are added to the heroes of the war," the officer said solemnly.

It was as pilot of that Thames penny steamboat that David, some weeks later, once more entered Bagdad in the rear of Maude's victorious army.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNCONQUERED SANDS

A long line of camels silhouetted against the sky, moving with shuffling tread over ancient sands, billowy like a stormy sea.

A river, slow and old, flooding the land in spring and sinking to its own bed for the rest of the year, a historic river, upon which the Sphinx and Pyramids look down.

A busy, active population, prosperous and contented, growing the finest cotton on earth.

A line of thriving cities, in which East and West are blended in tawdry splendor.

Such is Modern Egypt.

Having, after the lapse of many months, heard from David that he was safely at Basra with his friend Ferguson, though all unknowing of his later adventures, the old archæologist settled himself down in Egypt to fulfill a dream he had had for years—a thorough examination of the antiquities of Egypt at his leisure.

But the Great War had its influence even over

so persistent a dreamer of old-world times as was Professor Surch. The conquests of Rameses, the Religious War in the time of the Shepherd Kings and the Roman Antony's thralldom to Cleopatra began to seem less important than the Allied Conquests under Foch, the Religious War between Civilization and Hun vandalism and the German Kaiser's enthrallment with the phantom of the Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway. Modern issues began to engross him, more and more.

Especially, try as he would, the archæologist could not understand the British position in Egypt. He read everything that he could get on the subject, becoming more and more confused the more he read. At last, his brain whirling, he dropped into a well-known club at Cairo and set himself to question one of his fellow-members whom he knew to be one of the best-informed men in Egyptian affairs.

The latter held up his hands in dismay.

"Explain to you the inner politics of Egypt!" he exclaimed. "Why, Professor Surch, that would take a week of steady talking!"

"You know what I mean," the archæologist replied. "I've read nearly all the books I could find on the subject, but I can't seem to get a clear

Australian Official Photo.

AUSTRALIAN CAMP AMONG THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT.

general outline. If you can give me that, I can fit in all the rest."

The young vice-consul smoked in silence.

"First of all," he said, "I suppose I ought to admit that you'll find the story puzzling, being an American, especially. You see, England does all sorts of things in very queer ways. We generally manage to come out all right at the end, but the processes are a good deal mixed up. Take Egypt, for instance. No one ever could do as much good as we've done in this country, but we've done it absolutely illegally, and by the smashing of treaties right and left."

The old archæologist was horrified.

"And you made such a noise about Bethmann-Hollweg calling the Belgian Treaty a 'scrap of paper,' " he said.

"Yes, I know," the vice-consul answered. "He shouldn't have said that. It was an undiplomatic phrase."

"You mean," said the American, now really shocked, "that you feel it was worse for him to say so than to act the way the Germans did?"

"Well," said the younger man, "I wouldn't go so far as to say that. But if Germany had simply paid no attention to the treaty and said nothing

about it, she could have excused herself afterwards and wriggled out of it. Anyway, that's what we've done in Egypt."

"Tell me about it, if you don't mind," asked the archæologist.

So the other, leaning back in his chair, began the story.

"I'm afraid I'll have to begin away back in 1517, when the Turks conquered the Egyptians and made Egypt a Turkish province. As a result of that conquest, Egypt was pledged to send 12,000 troops to the Sultan of Turkey in case of war; she was required to pay a large tribute, and she was to be governed by native chieftains or mamelukes, under a Turkish viceroy.

"Quite early in the nineteenth century Mohammed Ali, the Turkish viceroy of Egypt, started a war against the Sultan and the latter probably would have been dethroned if the Powers hadn't broken in to preserve the balance of Europe. England got into that little deal and worked so as to gain the friendship of both sides. She pleased the Sultan by arranging the treaty so that the tribute of two million dollars should still be paid, and that Egypt's army of 18,000 men should be at the disposal of the Sultan in war time, while the

Egyptians should be regarded as Turkish subjects. At the same time, she pleased Mohammed Ali by making the succession of the viceroyship hereditary, thus forming a dynasty, and by making the Egyptian Army independent and able to pursue its own schemes save only when Turkey had declared a war.

"In 1867, the grandson of Mohammed Ali made a new treaty with the Sultan, whereby he received the title of Khedive and was given more local importance. In return for this the tribute was raised to three million dollars—in your money. The building of the Suez Canal by the French had greatly increased the importance of Egypt, but, by a little financial juggling, we got control of the Suez Canal from France."

"The less said about that the better," remarked the archæologist. "I don't think England's actions in that affair would bear investigation."

"They worked," the British official declared unblushingly, "and in diplomacy, if a plan works one is supposed to forget how it was brought about. We had to control the Suez, you know, it's our main highway to India.

"Then in 1882 the revolution by Arabi Pasha came up. We invaded Egypt—France not wish-

ing to interfere—with the avowed object of maintaining the Khedive on his throne and to restore order, but, as a matter of fact, to strengthen our grip on the Canal.

"Ten years later, in 1892, a treaty was signed stating again that the Khedive was subject to the Sultan, that the Egyptians were Turkish subjects, that annual tribute must be paid, and that the Khedive was not allowed to make treaties. The Egyptian Army was at the disposal of the Sultan, the Turkish flag and not the Egyptian was to be used and all appointments above the rank of colonel were to be made by the Sultan. England agreed to all this. As late as 1910 England restated it, and affirmed that the Army of Occupation was only for the purpose of maintaining order and that we would evacuate the country some time. When, we would not say.

"All this was good for Turkey. As long as we were there, the country was prosperous. The tribute was paid regularly. Turkey did not have to trouble about keeping order in one of its turbulent provinces. British capital was developing the resources of the country. Once or twice complications came up, as in the Turco-Italian and Turco-Balkan wars, because of the right that

the Sultan undoubtedly possessed to summon an Egyptian Army to his aid. We threatened to withdraw our aid, if he did so, and both times Egypt remained unofficially neutral.

"Then came the Great War. The Germans at once sent agents to Egypt urging them to throw us out of the country. But we, in defiance of every treaty, urged the Egyptian government to consider itself at war with Germany and Austria, and gave all Germans and Austrians forty-eight hours to get out of the country."

"But this, sir," declared the American, "was a high-handed injustice. You had not the slightest right in the world to do such a thing."

"Not the slightest!" agreed the Englishman, cheerfully. "It was utterly illegal in every way. We forced a Turkish province to rebel against the Sultan, when we ourselves had signed a treaty stating that we would do all we could to keep that province loyal to the Sultan. Moreover, we forced Egypt to declare war, when the treaty we had signed definitely stated that Egypt, being a Turkish province, had not the right to declare war.

"Our violation of treaty rights got worse and worse. When Turkey undertook to send an army

against a rebellious province, a thing which she not only had a right to do, but in which we were bound by treaty to help her, we sent an army against her and told the Egyptians that they did not even need to fight for themselves but that we would undertake to fight their dishonorable battle.

"Regarded as diplomacy it was a nightmare. Sir Edward Grey demanded of the Sultan whether he intended to invade Egypt.

"The Sultan quite naturally replied that 'since Egypt was one of his own provinces, how could he invade it?'

"Finally war was declared between England and Turkey and then our position became even more like a situation in a comic opera. If we were at war with Turkey, then legally we were also at war with Egypt, for Egypt was still a Turkish province. English officers in the Egyptian Army were thus technically at war with England and at the same time were fighting England's battles. They were actually in the pay of their enemy, or, to put the matter another way, the enemy was paying them for fighting against him.

"Like characters in 'Alice in Wonderland,' we now stated that we were making war on the Turk-

ish Empire on behalf of Egypt, which, at the same time, we admitted was a part of the Turkish Empire; and we further declared that we were fighting in defense of a treaty which we broke by fighting in defense of it. Mad though it sounds, we were presumably fighting to uphold the Sultan's right to fight us for allowing the Egyptians to allow us to fight the Sultan on the Sultan's own teritory! Moreover, although we already knew that the Khedive had sided against England, we still recognized that the Sultan was his Overlord, and we therefore technically supported his position in attacking us." [1]

"But, in the name of common sense, how did you ever get out of such a muddle?" asked the archæologist.

"It was a pickle, wasn't it?" the official agreed. "First of all, we had a good large army of Australians and New Zealanders here—just to maintain order, of course, we said. We used Egypt for a training and drilling ground, so that there were plenty of soldiers here all the time. Then some heavy battleships were always handy. Besides that, the cotton crop having been poor and

[1] "The New Egypt," by A. E. P. B. Weigall, *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1915.

the fellahin or peasant cultivators restless, we lent the Egyptian government twenty-five million dollars to purchase the unsold cotton from small growers. That pacified the peasants, gave us a lot of cotton, which we needed for munitions, and, even more important, kept it out of German hands.

"Of course," here the British official became serious, "the real point was this: we had built up Egypt to comfort and good government, and we were hanged if we were going to hand over 12,000,000 human beings to German barbarism and Turkish spoliation. Technically we were wrong, of course, and we smashed to shivers our treaty—treated it as scrap of paper, if you like—but whereas Germany did the same thing for the injury of Belgium, England did it for the benefit of Egypt.

"As for straightening up the muddle, that came later. When it became evident that Egypt did not want to revolt and laughed at the Kaiser's 'Holy War,' when the chief ulemas (doctors of divinity of the Mohammedan faith) in Cairo University issued an edict of alliance, when the surrounding Sheiks showed friendliness, and when the whole native press was a unit in defense of the

British position, then a protectorate was formed, the pro-German Khedive was removed, and a prince of the old line was proclaimed Sultan. He is a young progressive monarch, a keen student of modern agriculture, and is proud of the title 'Father of the Fellahin.' Naturally, he swears by England through thick and thin.

"As an example, Professor Surch, of the sort of thing which has enabled us to win over Egypt—however illegally we may have done it—let me tell you just what I saw myself at the official review and march-past on the day of the Sultan's accession.

"Just as the main part of the great military parade was marching down the main street and passing the saluting point, a small native funeral came into sight along a side-street. It was stopped, of course, by the police. Now, from where he sat in the reviewing stand, Sir John Maxwell, who was taking the salute, could see this little funeral.

"Without a moment's hesitation, he intervened. He sent an aide-de-camp to the officers of the regiment which was passing, ordering a halt. The band of the Rifles, which was playing a marching air, was bidden cease playing. Sixteen men of

the Rifles were ordered to fall out and line across the main street as a guard of honor. Then Sir John Maxwell and his staff moved aside. The troops stood at attention, and the simple native cortège passed through the British lines.

"Then the lines were re-formed, the band resumed playing, the march-past continued as before. So far as the actual incident itself was concerned, it was trifling, but it made a deep impression on the fellahin. The native press gave far more space to the funeral than it did to the whole story of the parade and, far more than any speeches, it explained to the people of Egypt what England meant by being a protecting power. Imagine a German doing such a thing!"

"Germany," agreed the American, "would have wanted to punish the relatives of the dead man for daring to have a funeral on that day. After all," he continued, "that is the secret of England's power. She is ready to admit that other people have rights to be respected, and opinions of their own. Just for that reason I'm afraid the United States will never become a successful colonizing nation, because it is one unhappy characteristic of my countrymen that they think they know it all, and another that they

imagine that all the world ought to think as they do. I have never been able to employ any American assistants, either in my excavations in Palestine or Mesopotamia, for they want to Americanize the natives around them and they have little consideration for any point of view but their own."

"Yet they did mighty well in the Philippines," the British official interposed.

"Yes, in a way," the scholar replied, "but they imposed American ideas on the islands, they didn't develop the life they found there. That's much more the German idea.

"Take India, for example. Germany has long had an envious eye on India. This war was intended to be a means of winning it. Well, suppose Germany did take India, what would be the result? It would cost her more to keep it subjugated than it would be worth, for she would try to Germanize it. If my thirty years of life in the Orient has taught me anything, it is that you can't westernize an eastern people."

"How about Japan?" asked the official.

The archæologist frowned.

"Japan isn't either eastern or western," he answered. "She's the Germany of the East, and

an even more dangerous menace to modern civilization. But don't let us go as far afield as Japan. What's going to happen in this theater of war? Have the Turks had enough, do you think? I'm asking, especially, because I want to know if it would be safe for me to try to get to Jaffa by sea and by rail into Jerusalem. I could cross the desert again to Amara, easily enough, for the Arabs are friendly to me, and I want to get back to my boy."

"No," the vice-consul answered, "that's out of the question. The Turks and Germans together have a tremendous force gathered at Damascus, 250,000 men at least, and the Palestine railroad is altogether in their hands. But," and he tapped the table with his finger thoughtfully, "250,000 men at Damascus is a very different story from 250,000 men menacing the Suez Canal. It is not only ten times as difficult to move a force of that size in a desert country, but a hundred, yes a thousand times more difficult."

"Why?"

"Because there are few wells, and those that there are do not contain enough water," was the prompt reply. "Water is the one thing that modern science cannot manufacture. If it were

not that we hold control of the sea, the situation in Egypt would be dangerous, because it is easy to land troops on this coast. But, as long as the British and French navies hold the Mediterranean, Germany and Turkey are compelled to attack by land. You remember the last time. Well, even with modern devices, I don't believe that more than 25,000 men can be taken across the Sinai Desert, no matter what means are employed."

In this the official proved himself in the right, for when, a few months later, Germany and Turkey made a second attack, this time mainly by the northern route, across the desert, near the sea, 18,000 men was the utmost that could be moved after several months of preparation. The actual attack lasted but two days and the Turks were overwhelmed, with a loss of 5,000 men, all their guns, light and heavy, a million rounds of ammunition and 500 camels. A second time it was proved that the Sinai Desert was an efficient defense to the Suez Canal.

By the middle of January, 1917, Maude's advance on Kut was showing signs of bearing fruit. The time seemed ripe for an offensive movement from Egypt. Quite suddenly, without a hint of

preparation having leaked out, a strong force of infantry, chiefly Australians and New Zealanders, covered with clouds of Australian Light Horse and supported by the Imperial Camel Corps, marched at a swift pace from the Suez Canal along the sea-coast. They crossed the Serbonian bog (where Pharaoh's army was swallowed up),[1] by a bridge which had been built in sections and was carried to the front on camel-back.

This traversed, the column hurled itself on El Arish. The men traveled light, because, with England controlling the sea, supplies could be sent by the sea-coast. As always, it was a question of transport. Holding the sea, England held the key to transport, which the Turks and Germans lacked. El Arish was taken in one swift dash, with little fighting, and the Australians, not even pausing to rest, plunged on to Raffa, a sea-coast point on the extreme northeast corner of the Sinai Desert and just within the Egyptian boundary.

Without delay, a double-track light railway was built from El-Kantara on the Suez Canal, also a

[1] This is the real "reedy sea" or "Red Sea" of the Genesis account, not the present Red Sea, nor the Gulf of Suez. The mention of quails shows that the passage was near the Mediterranean, not toward the arid parts of South Arabia.

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

MILES UPON MILES OF SANDBAGS.
The movable wall of defence built by terrific toil under a burning sun.

railway junction, to El Arish and Raffa. Both were made strong military bases, with railroad communications to Egypt. Moreover, docks were built and harbors made, so that supplies could come by sea. The first great link in the Palestine campaign was made.

It was shortly after this important advance, that the archæologist was sent for by his friend, the British official. He found him in consultation with the military leaders, amid a sea of charts, maps and aëroplane photographs.

"I understand, Professor Surch," said one of the generals, "that you spent quite a number of years in Palestine. I wonder, if, by any chance, you know the neighborhood of Beersheba?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I know it very well. I had some friends among the Azazmeh Bedouins and paid them a visit. They had recently suffered a blood-feud with the Jahaline Bedouins, nearer Gaza, and I was present at the conference with regard to the payment of the resultant blood-debt."

"Excellent!" exclaimed the British general heartily. "I suppose you would have no objection to giving us some information as to the topography?"

"On the contrary, I should be very glad," the archæologist replied.

"You see, Professor, the point is this," the general explained. "We've got excellent maps, charts, photographs and that sort of thing, and our airmen have been able to tell us where the German fortifications lie, but information on details from a man who has been on the ground is often of tremendous value. First of all, let me ask you if it is impossible, as a practicable military measure, to make a detour on the eastern side of the Dead Sea and to attack Jericho from that side?"

"Absolutely impossible, I should say," the archæologist replied. "The Jordan is a terribly deep ravine, with sheer precipices on the eastern side, 2,000 feet deep in places. It is excessively rough, volcanic in places, with outcrops of lava and boiling springs. The strata of rock are twisted, making road-building difficult, if not impossible. On the western side the slopes are gradual and ascent to the plateau is made by steep ravines. These, however, could be made impregnable by an enemy, I should say, with very little labor."

"And how about the river itself, Professor?"

"The Jordan," the archæologist answered, "is

a swift, muddy, crooked stream. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea it has no less than twenty-seven waterfalls and rapids, and falls a thousand feet. The valley averages eight miles in width and the river itself varies from sixty to two hundred feet in width. In spring the valley is inundated with floods, in midsummer there are fords which can be passed on foot, though slowly and with difficulty.

"The valley is full of a rank vegetation, mainly tamarack, lotus, willow, bamboo, and greasewood. On the slopes are mustard and sage-brush. Near the river it is swampy. Malaria is rife all the year round. It is a sweltering hot-house, collecting the rays of the sun, the ravine being so low that no cool wind ever reaches it. The insect pests are even worse than I found them in Mesopotamia and poisonous snakes are common. The entire Jordan Valley is almost impassable, utterly uncultivated, miasmatic, and almost uninhabited. It resembles the Bad Lands of my country, with the added disadvantages of the unhealthiest part of the swampy tropical jungle of Mexico."

The general sat back in his chair and stared at the informant.

"The people of the Jordan Valley wouldn't thank you for that description, Professor," he said.

"There are none," answered the scholar. "It is a death-trap. Several times efforts have been made to cultivate the tropical lands in the valley, for they are incredibly fertile, but the heat, insects, snakes and malaria take too heavy a toll. To the Bedouin, crossing the Valley of the Jordan is a feat more dangerous than crossing the desert."

"Then you think it is out of the question for us to flank the German lines by a long detour and attack near Jericho?"

"It would be the suicide of the officers and the murder of the men," was the quiet reply, given in a tone which carried conviction.

There was no further discussion of the plan. The American had spoken with a certainty of knowledge and a drastic positiveness that admitted of no reply. The general turned to a chart.

"Then, in that case," he said, "as we supposed, we must attack the German line directly, and they have fortified the entire lower edge of Palestine from Gaza to Beersheba."

"But not beyond?" asked the archæologist quickly.

"No," the general answered, "but Beersheba is thirty miles in from the sea and the only wells in the neighborhood are in enemy hands. In front of their position runs the Wady Ghuzzee, apparently a dry stream."

"With steep banks," put in the archæologist, "and very rugged higher up, toward Beersheba."

"Now, as I understand," the general continued, "in front of Gaza there is a good plain for maneuvering. If, then, we can cross the plain, we ought to be able to take Gaza."

The archæologist followed the pointing finger.

"Yes, General," he said, "but, north of Gaza the plain becomes narrow. See here. Let us look at it from the Arabian desert and go westwards. The desert is a high table-land, from which rise ridges of mountains. The plateau is an average of 1,500 feet above sea-level. Westward of this line of desert comes the canyon of the Jordan, falling in places far below sea-level. That, as I said, is practically impassable.

"The western bank, while not so precipitous, rises steeply to an average of 1,200 feet, a very hard climb, and only possible by going up the

rocky beds of wadys cut through the stony soil. Then you're on another ridge, but not a flat one. It is all broken up by cross ridges and little plains.

"This is the Plateau of Palestine. On the western side, this plateau slopes down to the sea, in steep jumps. These jumps are crossed every few miles by wadys or sharp cracks in the stony soil, through which the torrents run in the spring and which are stony beds the rest of the year. None of these gullies are bridged. Each one is a difficult obstacle to ordinary foot-travel, and impossible to wheels. How an army would cross them, I don't know. Then, near the sea, the ridge comes down to a level plain. At some places this plain is as much as ten miles across, at others it isn't more than a few hundred yards. Gaza is the gate to this plain."

"Then you think, as I do, that we'd better attack Gaza."

"Why, as to that, General," the archæologist answered, "I have nothing to say. I don't pretend to know anything about military tactics. All I can do is tell you about the topography of the country, so far as I know it."

But, that evening, he spoke privately to his friend the vice-consul.

Courtesy of "The Graphic."

THE COMMISSARIAT CAMELS THAT FED THE ARMIES.

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

THE FLOOD PLAINS OF MESOPOTAMIA, HOT AND WET.

Courtesy of "Illustrated London News."

TRANSPORT CAMELS IN WADY GUZZEE, AEROPLANES OVERHEAD.

"It's no business of mine, of course," he said, "but I don't think much of that idea of a frontal attack on Gaza."

"Why?" asked the official.

"Because it's easy for the Turks to retire along the plain, and hold position after position."

"But the British hold the sea and can shell the plain from warships," the official protested.

"That does make it a bit different," the archæologist agreed, but he looked unconvinced.

As a matter of fact, the British were in grave danger, in Egypt, of falling into the same error which had proved so costly in Mesopotamia. The moment that they had begun the offensive, they had met with success. El Arish and Raffa had been taken with lightning strokes and with but slight loss. This bred confidence where it should have bred caution. Moreover, not realizing the thoroughness of General Maude's preparations, and still convinced of the fact that the occupation of Bagdad was a political rather than a military necessity, England had begun to grow timid as to a strong Turkish counter-offensive on the Tigris. General Sir Archibald Murray, in Egypt, therefore, was urged to march with speed against the Turkish lines, in order to deflect to that front

possible Turkish reënforcements which might be on their way for Mesopotamia.

Working in close coöperation with the navy, General Murray determined to throw his main force at Gaza. He thrust out a light force along the Wady Ghuzzee to protect his right flank. His left flank was supported by the sea.

The thrust was made in April, 1917. It met at first with what appeared to be complete success. The defenses of Gaza facing southwest, largely under fire of the warships' guns, were carried by storm at the first assault and the British forces entered the lines. Under the combined land and sea attack, the Turks could do nothing but evacuate the town.

But the Turkish Commander had shrewdly anticipated this, and was ready.

No sooner had the British forces reached the town, thanking their lucky stars that the defense had been so light, than there poured down from the ridge above the Wady Ghuzzee the full body of the German and Turkish troops, which had been withdrawn from Gaza. The Turks hurled themselves like an avalanche on the British right, which had supposed itself to be merely a covering

force protecting the flank, and cut it to pieces. Being a mobile column of cavalry and camelry, it had no chance against the German-officered light artillery and machine-gun companies. Compelled to make a half-hour's stand, in order to send news to the main body, now rejoicing in its success at Gaza, the British right flank was cut to pieces. A very small remnant galloped back to the main column.

Attacked in flank and rear, and in the teeth of the terrible danger that the irregular Arab hosts allied to the enemy might sweep round and cut their Line of Communications, the British were compelled to relinquish the prize they had gained.

They marched out of Gaza as quickly as they had marched in, and only by stubborn rearguard actions, costly in their character, did the troops get back to Raffa, whence they had started a few days before.

The Sinai Desert had proved as great a barrier to the British as to the Turks. Waterless and arid, menacing and desolate, it stretched between the two armies confronting each other.

The war had changed its aspect. It was no longer a question as to whether British should

conquer Turk, or Turk conquer British. The common enemy was the desert, sand, and sun, and sky. Victory would rest on the troops which could tame that grim and inhospitable wild.

The question was—which?

Australian Official Photo.

A New Trick for Sand-Marching.

Laying a strip of woven wire all the way across the Desert of Sinai, like one vast snowshoe, scores of leagues in length.

CHAPTER X

THE WINGS OF THE MORNING

Snakes a-plenty have been seen in Sinai, but never such a snake as this! In girth as large as a barrel, in length nearly two hundred miles!

Yet this was a life-dealing, rather than a death-dealing form, for it was a pipe-line carrying water across a thirsty land.

Months had come and gone. England had been compelled to learn in Sinai, as she had learned in Mesopotamia, that "Time comes from Allah, but Hurry is the child of the Evil One." The command of the operations in Palestine had been placed in the hands of General Sir E. H. H. Allenby, who had made a remarkable record as a military leader in France. General Allenby was, first, last and all the time, a cavalry man. He was chosen because of his astonishing skill in handling mobile forces for a campaign where mobility was essential.

It is no criticism of his predecessor to state that

Allenby realized the one great essential of the campaign. That essential was water. In the same fashion General Maude had seen that the prime necessity in Mesopotamia was transport. Maude would not move without ships, Allenby would not move without water. Moreover, learning from the vice-consul that the American archæologist was a man with very decided opinions and with an intimate knowledge of the country, Allenby and his staff consulted him frequently.

Wells are the one unchanging feature of the East. Cities may come and go, rivers may change their courses, and new peoples and tongues inhabit lands that never knew them, but the wells change never. The archæologist, in his wanderings with the tribes between Beersheba and Gaza, knew the wells visited by their herdsmen, for, in that nomadic life, the well is the all-important point from which life radiates.

"It is curious, General Allenby," said the archæologist one night at Staff Headquarters, "that the British and the Germans should be striving for Beersheba. The finger of history is writing the same page twice."

"How so, Professor?"

The old scholar smiled, and leaning back in his

chair, pulled a Bible from the shelf of books behind him.

"Suppose," he said, "that instead of my giving you any ideas about the campaign, we find out what Abraham did, over four thousand years ago."

"Abraham!" exclaimed one of the younger men.

"Yes, Abraham," the archæologist said. "Will you excuse me if I read you a few lines? And, turning to the Book of Genesis he read:

"And there was a famine in the land. . . . And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines (who dwelt) in Gerar. Then Isaac sowed in that land . . . and waxed great, for he had possession of flocks and possession of herds and great stores of servants and the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac:

" 'Go from us, for thou art stronger than we.'

"And Isaac departed thence and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had

digged in the time of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up. . . . And Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a well of springing water.

"And the herdsmen (of the Philistines who dwelt) in Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying:

" 'The water is ours!'

"And they digged another well and there was strife for that also.

"And Isaac removed from thence and digged another well, and for that they strove not, and he called the name of it Rehoboth. . . .

"And he went up from thence to Beersheba. And he builded an altar there and pitched his tent there, and there Isaac's servants digged a well . . . And it came to pass the same day (that Abimelech visited Isaac and made an alliance with him) that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him:

" 'We have found water.'

"And he called it Shebah, therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day."

The archæologist laid the book down and looked at the circle of interested faces around him.

British Official Photo.

VICTORY OVER THE FIERCEST ENEMY — THIRST.

The conquest of Palestine was made possible by the engineers of the Allied Armies. Water, pumped many miles through a twelve-inch pipe line, won many battles which bullets could not have gained.

"Gerar, the former headquarters of the King of the Philistines," he said, "lies on the Wady Ghuzzee just below Gaza. It is the actual headquarters of the Germans to-day. The ridge as far as El Ruweika, the central point of the German defense, was the line offensively defended by the Philistines. The wells at Beersheba, which were built by Isaac, under an alliance with the King of Philistines, are now the eastern end of the German line. Therefore, gentlemen, the German-Turkish defense line of to-day is the Philistine line of four thousand years ago."

"But this is wonderful!" ejaculated one of the staff officers.

"Now," continued the archæologist, "I have noticed, when dealing with Eastern matters, that it is always well to see what has been done in ages before by people in similar conditions. Let us consider the parallel.

"When the Philistines held Gerar and Gaza, Isaac's chief need was water. Now that the Germans hold Gaza, your chief need is water. Am I correct?"

"Precisely," the general answered.

"Now, in similar case, Isaac went down into the Wady Ghuzzee and dug two wells. He found

water in both. The wady, however, was under the domination of the ridge, just as it would be today, and from the two wells that he did dig, he was driven away by the Philistine herdsmen. You couldn't dig wells there now, gentlemen, because you would be under the guns of the Germans. Am I correct so far?"

"Absolutely," came the reply.

"Good, then. Now, gentlemen, what did Isaac do? He went south beyond the line of the Wady Ghuzzee, and in the open desert, in a slight depression, he dug a well. Please observe not only that he found water, but that he accepted this as evidence of his future prosperity, because he had tapped the underground springs of a water at a new place, where never a well had been dug before. This well he called Rehoboth.

"Gentlemen, if there was a well there in Isaac's time, there is one there now. If there was a vein of water under the desert in Isaac's time, it is there now. Four thousand years have passed since the well at Rehoboth saved Isaac, but it may save you."

General Allenby sat in his characteristic position, his chin resting on both clasped hands, his half-closed eyes studying the face of the scientist.

"If there's a vein of water there—" he began, then stopped, evidently unwilling to express a doubt. "Well, Professor Surch," he continued, "a thousand years later the Philistines were defeated by Samson, and their temple of Dagon was pulled into ruins, wasn't it? We'll take that for an omen."

Next morning, at daybreak, a party of engineers was on its way to Rehoboth, where Isaac's servants had dug a well. Though the winds of the desert had blown it full of sand and it had long been abandoned, because of the proximity of the better wells of Beersheba, the old maps of the region pointed so closely to the spot, that after no more than two days' survey, the pit or depression was found.

There the British digged a well, and there they found water. Modern engineering methods soon developed from Rehoboth, El-Khalasa, and Bir-Ashug which lie on the same vein of water that it tapped, a deep and permanent supply. Pumping-engines were installed and long concrete conduits made, so that large numbers of men and animals could be watered without unnecessary delay. By this, one of the greatest difficulties of military movements in the East was avoided. At

the same time, the pipe-line carried water from Egypt to the British base in Palestine.

A good example of General Allenby's precaution is seen in the fact that, although the wells at Beersheba were among the best in Palestine, he would not risk the safety of his troops upon the probability of the capture of those wells.

In his official report, he said:

"Arrangements had to be made to insure that the troops could be kept supplied with water while operating at considerable distances from their original water base for a period which might amount to a week or more, for, though it was known that an ample supply of water existed at Beersheba, it was uncertain how quickly it could be developed or to what extent the enemy would have damaged the wells before we succeeded in occupying the town. Except at Beersheba, no large supply of water would be found until Sheria and Hereira had been captured."

For this reason, not only did General Allenby develop the wells that Isaac had dug until they were deep enough and large enough to supply an army, but he ran two military railways inland from the line running to Raffa, one line south of the Wady Ghuzzee, the other as close to it as the

covering of the German-Turkish guns would allow.

In addition to this, Allenby did not stop collecting camels until he had 30,000 baggage-camels alone supplying one sector of his advance lines. At the average distance which one camel paces behind another, this would make a line of camels a hundred miles long.

The German-Turkish position was excessively strong. From the Jerusalem railway, two substantial lines had been built, with branches that touched at the five principal points of the defenses. Not only that, but, at cost of extreme labor and high expense, a well-metaled solid motor-road had been built from Gaza to Beersheba. This had necessitated a number of high bridges, and difficult engineering in the rocky defiles, but it had made the German-Turkish position so strong as to appear almost impregnable.

With the Sinai Desert as a barrier, the Gaza-to-Beersheba line seemed as secure as the line of the Suez Canal. The six groups of works were only 2,000 yards apart from each other, and formed six forts, Gaza being reckoned as a modern fort of the first order, comparable to Verdun. Complete trench systems linked the whole front. The railways had brought all the heavy German and Aus-

trian artillery that was needed. There were 180,000 men holding the line, and two great military leaders, General von Falkenhayn for the Germans and Enver Pasha for the Turks, were conducting the operations.

The first British attack under General Murray, which had resulted in disaster, had been made at Gaza. General Allenby decided to attack the other end of the line, but to do so entirely secretly, masking this attack by a prolonged bombardment of Gaza. He figured that if Gaza were bombarded for four days, both by land and sea, the Germans would be convinced that such a long artillery preparation could only be meant as a prelude to assault, and that they would reënforce the crucial point.

At the end of the four days, an attack would be made frontally and to the rear of Beersheba, the troops being hurled not at the points best protected with guns, but at the points most difficult of access. The Italian Campaign in the Alps had taught the Allies that almost impossible heights can be scaled by a modern army, and that even the exhaustion and difficulty of such toil is less injurious than open charges in the face of machine-gun fire.

Out, then, from the line of the wells dug by Isaac's servants four thousand years before, swept two great arcs of cavalry and mounted infantry. One column made a night march of 25 miles, the other of 35 miles. In a still wider arc, tens of thousands of bobbing camels toiled across the stony and rugged ways with food, water, and munitions. Thirty thousand camels in caravan was almost as good as a railroad!

Punctual to the minute, the five different columns commenced attack. Points which had been believed inaccessible were, at a given moment, seen covered with men; regions so far removed from water that it was not believed that 200 men could reach them, were occupied by 20,000 men with full supplies of war material. The Turks were taken utterly by surprise. They defended themselves gallantly, but were utterly unprepared for an attack in such force and at so many different points. Even so, it was not until evening that the infantry scaled the last heights above Beersheba and the Australian Light Horse broke through the outer defenses and dashed across the narrow plain surrounding the town.

With Beersheba in British hands, the German-Turkish line was seriously crippled, for the hold-

ing of that corner enabled Allenby to bring his troops up on the higher parts of the plateau. Gaza, down on the coastal plain, was flanked.

With admirable military skill, the German and Turkish forces concentrated at the middle of the line, evidently with the intention to stand off the main British attack and to send a hostile force into the Wady Ghuzzee, just as did the Philistines, to strike southwest and cut the line of communications by which the eastern force was operating. A little timidity here might have lost the British all that they had gained.

Allenby would not change his plans an inch. Bidding his men hold the middle of the line as best they could, he struck at Gaza, and, while the actual attack was in progress, whirled off some of the troops for a diagonal attack at Sheria, which commanded the middle portion of the line. This checked the assault on Gaza, and the Turks were congratulating themselves on having fought off the assault, when news came that Sheria was breaking. The British had straddled the motor road. All this work was done by infantry.

Then, once again, came Allenby's power as a cavalry leader. The horses and men of the cavalry, refreshed and unwearied, for they had

Courtesy of "Red Cross Magazine."

TURKISH CAVALRY NEAR BEERSHEBA.

Photograph taken by the German Official Bureau, and seized by the British when they entered Jerusalem.

been resting during this phase, were sent north like the flight of an arrow, to cover and hold the main Palestine ridge that rises between the canyon of the Jordan and the coastal plain. They could not overtake the Turkish Army fleeing from Beersheba, for the check at Sheria had given the former time to escape, but, by quick action, they could cut off the road from Gaza to Jerusalem and thus prevent the main German-Turkish army holding the coastal plain from climbing up to the ridge. Both the railway termini were seized and a flying column was pushed still further north to hold the principal wady paths rising from the plain to the ridge.

Allenby, by nature and training a cavalry commander, kept his infantry to finish with Gaza, and then swung every mounted man that he could find, horse and camel alike, into the holding of advanced points. One station after another on the two railways was seized. Clouds of cavalry hung on the Turks' flanks. Powerful squadrons of aëroplanes dropped bombs, and, sweeping low, combed the fleeing Turks with machine-gun fire. Meanwhile a division of infantry, marching light, and covered by the Imperial Camel Corps, forced its way north to the main railway line from Jaffa

to Jerusalem. This being straddled, the whole advance halted to re-form.

It was at this point that an Arab Sheik cantered up to the British lines and asked to see the Commander. On meeting the general, he salaamed, and said:

"The Bedouins have a prophecy, that when, by the will of Allah, the Nile shall flow into Palestine, then the prophet from the west shall drive the Turk from the lands of the Bedouin and the Bedouin shall be free. My young men have told me that a great miracle has been wrought, and that the Franji have made a great pipe by which the water from the Nile flows into Palestine. Is that true?"

"Water from the Nile basin," said General Allenby, making a slight correction, "yes, that is true."

"Then the Turk is doomed by the will of Allah to go," answered the Arab, "and my people are brothers with you."

And thus began one of the curious alliances with the roving Bedouins which hug the ridges on either side of the Jordan, an alliance which proved excessively valuable later in the campaign.

Presently the reënforcements came up, new

military bases were established, old wells, a hundred feet deep, were enlarged and modern pumping facilities established instead of the primitive hand-worked bucket and wheel, and General Allenby was ready to face the problem of taking Jerusalem. Not only was he too wise a commander, but he was also too reverent a man, to bring the destructive force of modern artillery against a city which is held sacred by Christian, Mohammedan and Jew alike, and he organized his campaign in such a way that all the fighting should take place at some distance from the Holy City, so that, at the last, it might be surrounded and compelled to surrender peacefully. Largely as a result of this carefulness, the ensuing fighting was bitter, for the British were compelled to allow the enemy to choose the best positions for defense.

"On December 10," wrote an eye-witness, "a sudden panic fell on the Turks, the British troops having passed Lifta, and being within sight of the city. A Turkish transport column, galloping furiously along the Jaffa road, alarmed all units within sight or hearing and the wearied infantry arose and fled, bootless and without rifles, never pausing to think or fight. Some were flogged from

behind by officers and compelled to pick up their arms, others staggered on through the mud, augmenting the confusion of retreat. After four centuries of conquest, the Turk was ridding the land of his presence in the bitterness of defeat, and a great enthusiasm arose among the Jews.

"'The Turks are running away,' they cried, 'the day of deliverance is come.'

"Towards midnight, the Governor, Izzet Bey, went personally to the telegraph office, discharged the staff and personally smashed the instruments with a hammer. From two o'clock until seven o'clock that morning the Turks streamed through and out of the city, which echoed for the last time to their shuffling tramp.

"On this same day, 2,082 years before, another race of conquerors, equally detested, were looking their last on a city which they could not hold. . . . It was fitting that the flight of the Turks should have coincided with the national Jewish festival of the Hanookah, which commemorates the recapture of the Temple from the heathen Seleucids by Judas Maccabeus, 'the hammer of God,' in 165 B. C.

"The Governor was the last civil official to depart. Before the dawn he hastened down the

Australian Official Photo.

AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE AT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

ANZAC CAVALRY WATERING THEIR HORSES BENEATH THE OLIVE-TREES ON MOUNT ZION.

Jericho road, leaving behind him a letter of surrender, which the Mayor, as the sun rose, set forth to deliver to the British commander, accompanied by a few frightened policemen holding tremulous white flags."

Nineteen years before, when the Kaiser in his fantastic political pilgrimage to the East had visited Jerusalem, none of the gates was wide enough for him to enter and a portion of the wall had to be broken down to admit his carriage, a reminder of the saying:

"It is easier for a camel to go through (that gate of Jerusalem which is named) The Eye of a Needle than for a rich (riches-worshiping) man to enter the Kingdom of God."

With a simple reverence that has echoed round the world, General Allenby, the conqueror, the victor of the last crusade, entered the Jaffa Gate on foot, his staff behind him on foot, without pomp or display, and with the regimental band silent. A proclamation, reverent and dignified, even tender in its wording, was read in English, French, Italian, and Arabic, stating that all the hallowed sites of the three great religions, Christian, Mohammedan, and Jewish, were to be preserved and guarded, and that the chief British de-

sire was to keep inviolate a city which all the world revered. The chief ecclesiastics and civic officials were then presented to the victor, who left the city on foot as he had entered it.

This reminded the old archæologist of the great entrance of the victors of the First Crusade, when the gallant Frenchman, Godfrey of Bouillon, elected King of Jerusalem, declined to wear a crown in a city where His Master had worn thorns, and contented himself with the title "Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulcher."

A couple of weeks after the British entrance to Jerusalem, the archæologist obtained permission from the authorities to come to the city, and met one of the British officers outside the reputed Tomb of Christ, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The officer's face bore a look of horror.

"I have been here a great many times," said the archæologist, appreciating his feeling, "and I always come with regret. Jerusalem is the most unlovely and disappointing city in the world."

The officer turned to him. He was a soldier of many hard campaigns, but his voice was trembling with anger and disgust as he answered:

"It is awful! What ought to be the most beautiful spot on earth is one of the vilest. Look at

British Official Photo.

"Reverently, and on foot, the Victor Entered."

General Allenby making his official entry into Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate, attended by French and Italian officers.

the streets leading to this, supposed to be the most sacred spot on the globe! Garbage, slops, and offal of every kind are dumped into the streets for the dogs to eat, one has to hold one's nose to reach here. The Way of the Cross is a pestilential danger.

"Here, at the entrance to the shrine, the ear is deafened by the shrill cries of peddlers selling fake relics, and the eye is offended by rows of beggars showing repulsive sores to try to get baksheesh. The Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Protestant Christians quarrel and swear and fight over their prayers. Guards have to be set to keep each Christian body apart, and they have to come at different hours. Never, even in battle, have I seen eyes so full of hate as around the Tomb of Christ. When the Turks kept guard with loaded guns to keep the Christians from killing each other here, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, they were doing the only thing possible. We have to do the same. How can we better the sectarian strife? What can we do?

"And the fraud, Professor! Three-fourths of the population of Jerusalem are professional swindlers. Not one of the trees on the Mount of

Olives has been as much as trimmed for fifty years, yet a thousand wagon-loads of olive-wood relics are sold annually, each tiny article of which is guaranteed to have come from the Mount. There are two Gardens of Gethsemane, and though the olive-trees in the gardens have ceased to bear fruit for fifty years, the monks sell a thousand gallons of sacred oil annually, in tiny bottles. The Pool of Siloam is a slimy horror and the sacred water is a breeder of disease. It is a city melancholy mad. Plague stalks in the streets. Murder fills the air.

"The streets inside Jerusalem are as unsafe by night as they are repulsive by day. Even now that we are here, we are compelled to warn strangers against wandering out by dark. In the older portions of the city there are no street lights, not even petroleum lamps. When darkness falls, the bazaars are closed, the shutters are put up, the camels and donkeys are turned into the corrals at the khans, and the people retire behind the blank, windowless walls that hide their habitations. Those who are compelled to go out on honest business at night, go fully armed and have lanterns carried before them. In passing through the streets at night, a stranger is apt to be touched

by a leper, bitten by a dog, or stabbed by a Mohammedan fanatic.'' [1]

''But you will soon change all that!'' declared the American hopefully.

''As much of it as we dare. But, I suppose because I am an Englishman, it irks me sorely to see that the only decent piece of architecture in the Holy City is the Mohammedan Mosque of Omar, on the site of Solomon's Temple. And it is one of the most beautiful buildings in the whole world.''

''Will the Jews rebuild the Temple?''

The officer shrugged his shoulders.

''How can we give the site to the Jews? We have already promised to protect every shrine,'' he said, ''and in the Mosque of Omar is the stone which Mohammed's foot last touched when he departed for heaven, or so tradition states.'' He broke off suddenly. ''Here, let's get away to the European quarter, Professor,'' he said, ''I can't stand much of this!''

The archæologist smiled rather sadly and followed. To him the Holy City was less repulsive, for he had lived in the East many years and was

[1] ''To-day in Syria and Palestine,'' by W. E. Curtis (Fleming H. Revell Co.).

accustomed to dirt, smells, neglect, knavery and violence. He could see beneath the surface, also, and felt the reverence for places that had been hallowed for thousands of years. And he thought, as he struggled through the foul streets, that if England could make Jerusalem worthy of its great traditions, the work would be worthy of England's greatest endeavor.

To most of the British officers, it was a distinct relief when the Turks returned and with a counter-attack, strove to regain the Holy City. True, their camp was outside the walls, but the fanatic gloom of Jerusalem reached even there.

The troops dashed out at the enemy entrenched upon the hills and threw them back in disorder. The Turks resisted stubbornly and losses were heavy on both sides. The hills around Jerusalem were drenched in blood. Success lay with the British largely because of the control of the air, which prevented the Turks from learning British troop movements, and, at the same time, revealed every Turkish movement to the British.

The hills thus gained, General Allenby decided to take Jericho. Now, the walls of the city of Jericho may have fallen during the campaign by Joshua after a six-days' encircling of them and a

great blowing of trumpets, but General Allenby recognized that modern war has taken on other aspects.

His preparations for the taking of Jericho were detailed and difficult. A famous city was Jericho, almost the only oasis in the Valley of the Jordan. Herod the Great built a great city there, a city of palaces, with an amphitheater, temples and a university which was borrowed from the models of Greece. He gave the city as a gift to Cleopatra, before the Queen of Egypt had met Mark Antony. It was to this city that Christ came and stayed with Zacchaeus, the tax-gatherer who had climbed a tree to see the passing of the new prophet.

"There are only three routes possible to human beings between Jerusalem and Jericho," says a modern writer.

General Allenby took none of these.

The descent into the Valley of the Jordan is a terrible descent, and, in his official report, the British commander says:

"Compelled to move in single file over tracks which were exposed to machine-gun fire from the enemy's position, and which had been registered accurately by the enemy's guns, the progress of the mounted troops was necessarily slow. By two

P. M., however, the enemy was driven from his position."

Some idea of the incredible roughness and apparent impossibility of the ground is found in the fact that it took a field artillery battery thirty-six hours to cover a distance, as the crow flies, of only eight miles.

Jericho thus taken, the right flank of the British Army was safe and Jerusalem was secure against any possible hostile action. The left flank rested on Jaffa, an ancient port from which Jonah started on the voyage when he was said to have been swallowed by a sea-monster, and where the Apostle St. Peter saw his famous vision in the house of Simon the tanner. Being a seaport, and under protection of the guns of British warships, the left flank was secure.

It was at this point that the archæologist resumed his usefulness. In coöperation with British officers, acting partly as an interpreter, but in reality more as a consultant, he visited the Arab tribes southeast of the Dead Sea, and arranged an alliance with the Shereef of the Hedjaz, Emir or Prince Faisal. Thus supported, General Allenby was ready to cross the Jordan and attack the Hedjaz Railway. The campaign of conquer-

ing the heights on the western side of the Jordan and then of crossing it was of almost unparalleled difficulty.

"The ground over which the advance is to take place," wrote General Allenby, "is rugged and difficult. A succession of high and rocky ridges, separated by deep valleys, afforded the enemy a series of positions of great strength. The slopes of the ridges are in many places precipitous. Ledges of rock confine the descent to definite places on which the enemy could concentrate his fire. It was impossible for companies and platoons to move on a wide front. The slopes were swept by machine-gun and rifle fire and the bottoms of the wadies by enfilade fire. The ascent on the far side was deeply terraced. Men had alternately to hoist and pull each other up, under fire, and finally to expel the enemy from the summits by hand-to-hand fighting."

Nor was the Jordan any more friendly to the British than it had generally proved to armies which had tried to cross it during the ages of history.

"The Jordan," wrote General Allenby, "is unfordable at this time of year (March). The current is at all times rapid, and is liable to sudden

floods, which render the banks boggy and difficult of approach for transport. On March 28, it rose nine feet. The rain which fell during the operations rendered the tracks in the hills slippery and the movement of horses, and especially of camels, slow and difficult."

The fortunes of war wavered to and fro during this difficult campaign, the Turks, on one occasion, having secured nine British guns, which, Allenby remarks, "were unable to traverse the intricate ground."

Yet the Jordan was crossed by sheer endurance and strength. No kindly landslip occurred to dam back the Jordan as happened in about 1200 B. C. when the Children of Israel crossed the Jordan under Joshua, or as in 1267 A. D. when the same phenomenon was repeated during the building of a bridge across Jordan by Sultan Beybars I of Egypt.

Jordan crossed and the British Army conjoined with the forces of the Bedouin tribes of the Hedjaz on the plains of Moab, the taking of the Hedjaz Railway was a campaign of only moderate difficulty. Encamped on the heights, not far from where Moses had his only view of the Promised Land that he was not permitted to enter, the Brit-

ish and the Arabs struck east and straddled the railroad which now parallels the Pilgrims' Way to Mecca which for nearly thirteen centuries has been continuously trodden by the feet of devout Moslems going to the birthplace of the Prophet. To the western world the claims of Mohammed to be a Prophet have seemed strange, but it is to be remembered that one-third of the population of the civilized world is Mohammedan and that sobriety, devoutness, hospitality, generosity, courage, faith, and fidelity are the principal teachings of Mohammed. For twelve centuries, seven times a day, from every mosque in the world rings the cry:

"Prayer is better than sleep!"

And every devout Mohammedan within hearing casts down his prayer-carpet and repeats the words of his devotions.

Thus the Pilgrims' route to Mecca fell into English hands. The two Sacred Cities of the East looked to the British as their Overlord.

There remained but one step more to the final conquest of the East, the capture of Damascus, the capital of Syria, one of the most ancient cities of the world, perhaps, actually, the oldest in point of view of continuous occupation. It is said by

Moslem tradition to have been founded by Adam. Josephus, the great historian, declared that it was founded by Uz, the great-grandson of Noah.

Coming to more reliable tradition, the Old Testament states that Eliezer, Abraham's steward, was of Damascus, known by that name even in those far-off times. Nine hundred years later, the Syrians resented the development of the Jews under David, whereupon he sent a punitive expedition against Damascus, and established a "garrison" there. The great city passed through many hands, became the capital of many dynasties, but was taken by the Arabs or Saracens from the hands of the Byzantine Empire, and fell at last into the hands of the Turks. Almost alone of all the cities of the East, Damascus has maintained its importance for four thousand five hundred years. No city, even in China, can show such a record.

With characteristic liberality, General Allenby urged the Arab army to participate in the victorious entry into the city. They had deserved it. They had fought well and bravely. British Yeomanry, Australian Horse, Indian Horse, Arab Horse and Camelry, the largest mobile cavalry army that the world has ever seen, swept north-

ward over 150 miles of desert, where grows not a blade of grass nor flows a stream of water, and captured Damascus. They were opposed by an army of 100,000 Turks, with 16,000 Germans, the latter providing the artillery, machine-gun companies, signal service and general liaison. The fighting was sharp but decisive. The mobility of the huge cavalry force was decisive, and almost before it could be realized that a cavalry arm could be sufficient to conduct an entire campaign, on October 1st Damascus was in British and Arab hands.

But, in the meanwhile, tragedy had laid its hand upon Mesopotamia. Attending, with kindly courtesy, an entertainment given by Arabic children in an orphange, General Maude was deliberately poisoned. The evening of the third day he died.

The East is still the East.

General Marshall was appointed in command, a man in no sense as great in executive power as General Maude, but a military leader of the first rank. He did not, could not know the Mesopotamian situation as Maude had done.

When the news of Maude's death came, the old archæologist went to the Military Commandant in Jerusalem.

"General," he said, "I can be of help in Bagdad."

"Yes, Professor," was the reply, "there's no doubt of that. But Bagdad's a long way from here."

"Not so far," said the American.

"There's the desert to cross!"

"It's not so far," repeated the American, "—by aëroplane."

The Commandant looked at him.

"You mean—fly!"

"Yes."

"And if engine trouble develops, or something of that sort?"

"If every one thought of the dangers first, what would be accomplished? If I can get a volunteer from the Royal Flying Corps to act as pilot, will you speak to the Commander of the squadron?"

"Yes," was the ready reply, "that I will."

So the Syrian desert saw the great plane, high in the air, sailing from west to east, bearing an English pilot and the undaunted American scholar.

No engine trouble developed. Stronger than the beating of any living wings, the aëroplane sped

From "Sphere": U. S. Copyright, N. Y. Herald Co.

THE END OF THE LAST CRUSADE.

General Allenby receiving the Turkish delegate who handed over the city of Jersualem to the British authorities.

over sands that had never been crossed before save by the patient camel or the irregular dashes of the Arab horse, sped over the Syrian sands and slowly sank to rest on the plains that lie between Babylon and Bagdad, not far from where the tents of a Bedouin encampment dotted the silence.

As the aëroplane settled to earth a party of Arab horsemen came dashing forward.

"Robbers!" said the pilot, reaching for his service revolver.

The archæologist scanned the approaching figures.

"No, friends!" he declared, with a smile. "I know all the Sheiks of the tribes in these parts."

The figures came still nearer.

"And these," he added, "I know especially well."

A light boyish figure leaped off the nearest horse and dashed forward with a hearty hand-grip.

"Father!" he cried.

The taller figure salaamed profoundly.

"O Man of Peace," he said, pointing first to the aëroplane and then around him to the fields cultivated under the irrigation already set in ac-

tion by the English engineers, "it is the prophecy come true. 'The Wings of the Morning have flown from the west to the east, and the fields of Babylon are green again.' "

THE END

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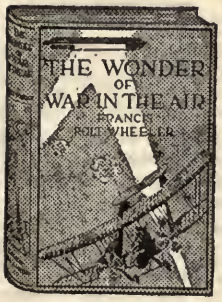

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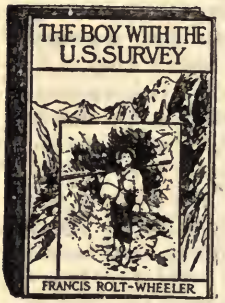

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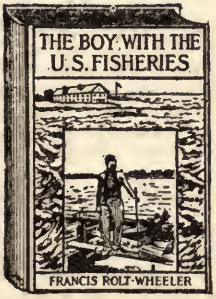

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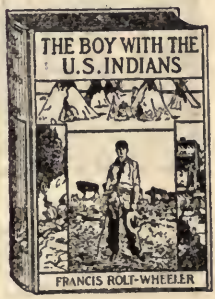

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